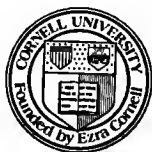


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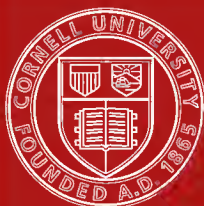
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SHAKESPEARE'S

EDITORS AND COMMENTATORS.

BY THE

REV. W. R. ARROWSMITH.

INCUMBENT OF OLD ST. PANCRAS.

LONDON:

J. RUSSELL SMITH, 36, SOHO SQUARE.

1865.

CHAPTER I.

IN a letter to Nicholas Okes the printer, inserted at the end of Heywood's "Apology for Actors," a treatise published in 1612, speaking of William Jaggard the writer observes, "The infinite faults escaped in my booke of Britaines Troy by the negligence of the printer, as the misquotations, mistaking of syllables, misplacing half lines, coining of strange and never heard of words, these being without number, when I would have taken a particular account of the *Errata*, the printer answered me, hee would not publish his owne disworkmanship, but rather let his owne fault lye upon the necke of the author."

Now, whatever reason Heywood had to feel himself aggrieved, a comparison of his *Troja Britannica*,*

* Mr. Dyce appears not to be acquainted with this poem of Heywood's, or he would hardly have ventured the bold assertion:—"I have therefore not the slightest doubt that wherever 'statue' occurs, while the metre requires three syllables, it is an error for 'statua.' Our old poets no more thought of using 'statue' as a trisyllable than 'stature,' a third form of the word which is not unfrequently found." Note 102. P. 217 of Vol. 5. Ed. 1864. For, notwithstanding Heywood's fretful outburst at his printer's carelessness and selfish perversity, "statue" never occurs in the *Troja Britannica* as a trisyllable, but it has the diæresis, *e.g.* :—

printed by William, with the first Folio Shakspeare, printed by Isaac Jaggard, will show that the like complaint might far more truly have been preferred

Of marble statuës many thousand more. Cant. 5. St. 111.

Two hundred of his traine his eye hath seene

All statuës. Cant. 6. St. 42.

Placing his statuë that his prayse did sing,

In Romes hye Capitoll. Cant. 8. St. 10.

On which Apolloes statuë dwels for aye. Cant. 10. St. 46.

Besides, in Note (50) to *Love's Labour's Lost*. P. 243-4 of Vol. 2, after reporting that, "Whitely (in the old eds. 'whitly'*), has been considered by some critics as a questionable reading, Rosaline being, as we learn from several places of the play, dark-complexioned,"—critics, by superlative euphemism thus named, so devoid of all judgment as to deem "whitely" akin to fair, although, if common observation may be our guide, whiteness, whether by contrast or not, is a peculiar attribute of dark features,—Mr. Dyce proceeds to remark that, "on the other hand Walker (*Crit. Exam.* &c. Vol. 2, p. 349), cites the line with the reading 'whitely:'" and quotes from North's Plutarch, "lean and whitely-faced fellow:" whence two things may be concluded, one, that the epithet "whitely" is not rare, since it was picked up by Walker in a note of Malone's, on a passage in Act 2. Scene 9, of the *Merchant of Venice*, without any suspicion by that critic that it would ever be wanted to support the authentic reading in *Love's Labour's Lost*; another, and that which has provoked the present mooted of a point to be discussed hereafter, that Mr. Dyce is evidently not aware that this adjective "whitely" occurs in Cant. 5. St. 74, of the *Troja Britannica*:—

"That hath a whitely face, and a long nose,

And for them both I wonderous well esteeme her."

Which lines do not merely furnish an instance of the epithet "whitely," but, in such company as parallels Shakspeare's

* Misprinted in the Camb. Ed. "whitley."

by Heminge and Condell against the latter, even after every allowance is made for the greater liability to mistake in the persons, their exits and entrances, the multifarious dialogue, the broken sentences, and varied phraseology of a play. It would therefore be manifest injustice to fasten upon the editors of the Folio 1623 blunders for which its printer Jaggard is clearly accountable, or in any measure to make those a ground for impugning the good faith of its somewhat partial representation, that "where (before) you were abused with diuerse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of iniurious impostors, that expos'd them: euen those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceiued thē.

coupling of it with "a wanton." If the pertinency of this argument be lost upon "some critics," it only adds further proof, where none is needed, that they have no pretensions to that name, nor the faintest calling to interfere with Shakespeare's text: for their enlightenment, however, it may be stated that though "whitely" and "fair" be not near allied, "wantonness" and "a long nose" are, at least in our early dramatic writers, from whom principally old readings must be made good. That Mr. Collier should turn "whitely" into "witty" discloses more puerility of artifice than defect of knowledge; while its transformation into "wightly" by the Cambridge editors should be a warning to them and their compeers not to embark in novelties, nor quit their proper province, but stick to the drudgery of collating and compiling, for which they may not be meanly qualified, and forbear to intrude upon even the outskirts of the domains of philology, wherein they have neither part nor lot.

—And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee have scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers”—yet how many annotators, how many editors of Shakespeare, down to the present time, visit the sins of Jaggard upon Heminge and Condell; do by them what Heywood deprecated with respect to himself, “let the faults of the printer lie upon their necks.” And because “the dram of base doth all the noble substance often draw to his own scandal,” hence the slur derived from the printing-house upon their credit as editors has left no parts of their work free from question; sound and unsound alike have in turn been doubted, and tampered with: the up-shot is, that in many places Shakespeare’s genuine language has been discarded, and the text alloyed with adulterate mixtures; exclusive of that long array of unvitiated readings whereof the meaning has been balked. The customary speech, and syntax of the 16th century are sometimes supplanted, another while hybridised, every where measured by a diction and syntax prevalent in the 17th, 18th and 19th; a mishap to some extent unavoidable, because the dialect of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, undergoes a change so gradual that it is not noted; variation is lost in resemblance; and to Englishmen reading English an obsolete style is still unconsciously identified with each successive ever-widening divergence from it: but such has been the illiterate pedantry of officious notemongers that sentences of a construction not less current now than 260 years ago are

evermore cavilled at, and either misexpounded, or if the true sense be hit, the words are wrenched, and sprained, and untruly sorted. An ill-printed book, but above all, minds unseasoned with Elizabethan literature have wrought the biggest half of this mischief; the only remedy for it is, what many students, many interpreters, and not a few editors of Shakespeare sadly lack—reading, extensive reading, to quell meddlesomeness, and beget self-distrust. By dint of that Englishmen will begin to comprehend, how huge is the debt of gratitude owed by their countrymen to Heminge and Condell.

A little taste at the outset will be enough to evince that Shakespeare, to be understood, must be read in the light, and by one habituated to the light of his times: thus, to ‘occupy’ and to ‘do,’ verbs that in the reign of Elizabeth and her successor were suggestive of “most maculate thoughts,” have long lost the ambiguous import, which ribald pleasantry for a season lent them, and now, as of yore,—as when Shakespeare was a boy,—may be uttered in ears never so captious, without risk of perversion; and although “soon” in the west of England to this day, as is said,* still signifies “evening,” yet elsewhere, or to persons unversed in the nomenclature of the Tudor-Stuart æra, such a signification is unknown, and would be sought to as little purpose in the Minsheus† of a prior, or a later date, as in the

* Halliwell’s Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words.

† Minsheu’s Ductor in linguas.

grammar of a Bullokar or a Murray would the fact, attested by a contemporary of Shakespeare, a Head-Master of St. Paul's School,—that the use of “soon” as an adverb, in the familiar sense of “betimes,” “by and by,” or “quickly,” had, when he wrote, been eclipsed with most men by an acceptation restricted to “nightfall:” the statement of this witness is worth quoting in his own words. In the comparison of adverbs, at page 28 of his *Logonomia Anglica*, ed. 1619, Gil writes — “Quickly cito, sooner citior aut citius, soonest citissimus aut citissime, nam ‘soon’ hodie apud plurimos significat ad primam vesperam, olim cito.”

Bating errors of the Press, most of which an average English scholar might, as he reads, amend for himself; and forgiving Jaggard his execution of a task from MS., which the reprint of 1807 failed to match from letter-press, it is a great treat to ramble over the Folio, photolithographed by Day, without let or rub of notes, wherewith bile, or dulness, conceit, or immaturity in the critic has overlaid and depraved so many editions of the greatest poet of the world.

Horne Tooke spoke but the truth, when he said, “it is much to be wished that an edition of Shakespeare were given literatim according to the first Folio; which is now become so scarce and dear that few persons can obtain it. For by the presumptuous license of the dwarfish commentators, who are for ever cutting him down to their own size, we

risque the loss of Shakespeare's genuine text ; which that Folio assuredly contains ; notwithstanding some slight errors of the press which might be noted without altering." *Diversions of Purley*, ed. 1798, Vol. 2. p. 52.

Forestalling a remark to have been made in due course, and with a view to support this charge of Horne Tooke's against the commentators ; to push it to the minutest particulars ; to prove that they either find, or make a flaw in the clearest and most perfect sentence, a passage shall be here quoted from "*Measure for Measure*," a play unpublished in Quarto, but not more noticeable for the evident accuracy with which it has been handed down to us in the Folio, than for the strange, and manifold mistakes, committed by subsequent editors and glossarists in their treatment of it.

In Act 3. Sc. 1, Claudio says to his sister,

"Why giue you me this shame?
Thinke you I can a resolution fetch
From flowerie tendernesse? If I must die,
I will encounter darknesse as a bride,
And hugge it in mine armes."

This speech of Claudio is so pointed in the Folio, so by Mr. Halliwell, so by the Cambridge editors, (with a note that in his edition of 1857 a full stop is substituted for the mark of interrogation at "tender-ness" by Dyce after Heath), and so by Mr. Dyce in his edition now in progress. Mr. Halliwell, adopting Capell's explanation, says, the meaning is, "Why do

you thus put me to shame? Think you my resolution is to be formed by eloquent pathos? Claudio is now indignant that his sister should imagine he had not courage to prepare for death without being reasoned into it. This interpretation seems more natural than Heath's, "I must desire that you, on your part, will do me the justice to think that I am able to draw a resolution from this tenderness of my youth, which is commonly found to be less easily reconciled to so sudden and so harsh a fate." So far Halliwell; and fair fall the wit that finds "flowery tenderness" in Isabel's reasoning; or thinks to cloak a transparent repugnancy between the two, under the appellation, "eloquent pathos;" as if that were as warranted a synonym for the one, as it may pass for a tolerable description of the other; nor sees withal how absurd it would be in Claudio to emulate the pathos that he decries: but happiest head of all be his dole, that by altering a point, with Heath, can treat "flowery tenderness" as the usual attribute of manhood, and conceive the fetching thence a resolution to die to be a feat either natural or suitable. The same mind that could characterise Claudio's age and sex by flowery tenderness, is not such as would extract from it the courage to meet an untimely and a shameful death. How Mr. Dyce interprets the passage can only be surmised; the punctuation of Heminge and Condell, which in his first edition was dislodged by Heath's, is reinstated in his second, his present edition, but it may be again over-ruled in

his "Addenda;" for there is an odd mixture of positiveness and vacillation in his comments, venial in greener heads, that is very mortifying to such, and they are not few in number, who entertain the highest respect for his plain sense and undoubted scholarship. However, you may boldly say that not an editor or annotator of them all has apprehended the poet's meaning: certainly this has not been done by either Heath or Capell: and had the right key to it, a sufficiently obvious one, been known to others, the true purport of Claudio's words would not be given for the first time now.

"Flowery tenderness" was rightly understood by preceding expositors to be a figurative expression, but they missed to recognise in it an abstract for woman, her loveliest and most native, her first best quality. As with the ancients, a point by and by to be noticed, "masculine virtue," we are told,* is personated by the man Perseus, so with us moderns, and namely here in Shakespeare, by "flowery tenderness" woman is expressed. Out of some dozen apposite places that establish this—one,—but such a one as once to have seen, much more to have edited their works where it is found, forbids the thought that it could ever be forgot: the sentiment is itself so just, and the handling of it so exquisitely characteristic of the writers. In Act 5. Sc. 2. of Beaumont and Fletcher's "Thierry and Theodoret," Thierry says to his mother,

* Jonson's *Masque of Queens*.

“ Oh mother, do not lose your name, forget not
 The touch of nature in you, tenderness,
 'Tis all the soul of woman, all the sweetness.”

After the high Roman fashion Isabel lectures her brother about death, and obtrudes her fears of his courage to meet it ; whereupon poor Claudio naturally enough resents this imputation upon his manhood, and disdains to be beholden to his sister, to a woman, to “flowery tenderness” for a resolution to die ; outbidding withal the tone of superiority assumed by the weaker sex in an extravagant boast, soon to be falsified, that he would “encounter darkness as a bride, and hug it in his arms.”

How finely are the austere precepts, the brave admonitions of a maiden that wished “a more strict restraint upon the sisterhood, the votarists of St. Clare,” contrasted by the poet with Juliet’s timid and sensitive apostrophe to the “injurious love,” which respites a sentenced criminal for a few hours from execution, to spend the interim, as Spenser has it, “half dead with dying fear,” a life so punctually limited, that in Shakespeare’s nicer reckoning, its prolongation, which is “its very comfort,” was “still a dying horror” !

Here again we have lighted upon a second passage now for the first time explained aright. It is a crucial instance, and from among two or three more in the same play, such as affords a delicate test for discriminating between the reader who is at home in Shakespeare’s English, and one that has studied it

but as a strange tongue. The sense is utterly missed by every editor and commentator, early or late, learned or unlearned, who has essayed to give it. Hanmer first corrupted the text, and that is the sum of his success. Mason and Dyce applaud and adopt his corruption with a like result. They are as wide of the true meaning as Johnson, and Steevens, and Tollet, and Halliwell. What Shakespeare wrote and what Heminge and Condell printed, now to a tittle reprinted by Mr. Staunton, is this:—

Duke.—"There rest :

Your partner (as I heare) must die to morrow
And I am going with instruction to him,
Grace goe with you, *Benedicite.*

[*Exit.*

Jul.—Must die to morrow? O injurious Loue
That respits me a life, whose very comfort
Is still a dying horror.

Pro.—"Tis pittie of him."

[*Exeunt.*

Mr. Dyce's note is as follows: "The folio has '*Oh injurious Loue,*'—well does Mason observe that both Johnson's explanation of this passage (with the old reading) and Steevens' refutation of it prove the necessity of Hanmer's amendment (*law*), which removes every difficulty, and can scarce be considered as an alteration, the trace of the letters in the words *law* and *love* being so nearly alike—the *law* affected the life of the man only" (referring to Johnson's hypothesis that Juliet's life was respited on account of her pregnancy) "not that of the woman: and this is the injury that Juliet complains of, as she wished to die with him." It will be seen that

neither Mason nor Dyce accounts for the words "a life whose very comfort is still a dying horror," nor for the Provost's reply, "'tis pity of him." The replacement of "love" by "law" might be justified by similarity of letters, but the obstacles to their exposition of the text thus vitiated are left as insurmountable as before.

The Cambridge editors and Mr. Halliwell retain the authentic reading "love," the former without comment, the latter interpreting thus: "Love here as in other instances is merely used in the sense of kindness. 'Injurious love' is nearly equivalent to the very common phrase, mistaken kindness." So far not amiss; although more nearly synonymous with "injurious love" would be "cruel kindness," words by which, with yet graver meaning, the *Times* in a leader of the 5th of November '64, reflected public opinion of the attempt of certain Germans to save a murderer from the gallows. But Mr. Halliwell goes on: "O injurious kindness which spares my life, a burden to me worse than death, whose very comfort in the love of Claudio is still a dying horror. 'Tis pity of him, that is of Angelo, that he should be so severe." Whatever be the meaning of this cloudy paraphrase—the text is sunlight to it—Mr. Halliwell, in common with the rest, understands the respited life to be Juliet's; he is however singular in endeavouring to reconcile the Provost's reply, "'Tis pity of him," with Juliet's alleged bewailment of her own hard lot; and is entitled to credit for

confronting a difficulty, which has not been faced, perhaps not observed by any but him: he is likely to be as singular in the twist which he gives to the Provost's words, and in applying them to Angelo.

Had Juliet's reflection not been intelligible in itself, the Provost's answer would convict the editors and commentators of inexcusable blundering. Let jocular Grumio catch at the ambiguity in his master's bidding, "Knock me here soundly,"* to make Petruchio the subject of the knocking meant by him for the gate, but let not a grave bench of Aristarchuses enforce Grumio's syntax elsewhere, to the marring of the sense, with its usual accompaniment, disturbance of the text. Petruchio's "me" in "knock me here soundly," and Juliet's "me" in "respites me a life," bear just the same import. It is a very hackneyed mode of speaking, not peculiar to the English language, used both in prose and verse, either in light or serious discourse.

And here one cannot but remark how preposterous is that system of education which instructs a boy in the usage of a Greek pronoun, and leaves him at ripe age, and even to grey hairs, insensible of a precisely similar use of the same pronoun in English; which teaches him at sixteen to construe readily from a Greek Play such an instance as occurs for example in the second line of Sophocles' *Œdipus Tyrannus*,† and finds him at sixty, in a parallel

* "The Taming of the Shrew," Act I. Sc. 2.

† *Τίνας ποθ' ἔδρας τάσδε μοι θαύζετε;*

instance from Shakespeare, so completely at fault about the words "respites me a life," as to be driven to maintain that an unrivalled dramatist, a bard of bards, had represented a young lady, whose life the law could not be said so much to spare, as not to touch at all, one who was to "live the lease of nature, and pay her breath to time and mortal custom," who might survive her speech for half a century, speaking of that life as "respited," and its "very comfort" throughout fifty years to come, as "still a dying horror"! "Cowards, indeed, die many times before their deaths," but even their life is not a life-long horror of dying, not a life-long death-pang. The sum is this,—“must die to-morrow,”—the Friar’s tidings reiterated by Juliet, words under which lie couched the painful suspense of death, the poise and lingering descent of the executioner’s uplifted axe, those few but pregnant words are the thesis to which her after discourse is wholly confined, and every syllable of that discourse would be as true and just in the mouth of the Provost, or of a commentator, as in Juliet’s: what prompted the utterance of it was a “fee grief due to her single breast,” her lover’s death the next day: of that grief as the Provost’s answer, “’tis pity of him,” is the appropriate acknowledgment, so is it incompatible with any other version of her speech than that given above.

But to return whence was digressed. Granted that one or two Quartos furnish better readings in a

few instances than the Folio; granted that they contain passages omitted in that edition which we should be sorry to lose, or which may be wanted to fill up a gap in the sense; granted that the wording and sentiments of the author's MS. were not scrupulously retained in the Play-house copies, or that both have in the Folio here and there undergone a little "Buttering;" one of which last things, unless Ben Jonson be not only inaccurate but untruthful, must have happened in the case of the passage from Julius Cæsar, ridiculed in his "Staple of News," and again formally censured in his "Discoveries;" granted also that such misprints as that of "*clamour*" for "chamber your tongues," in the Winter's Tale, which supplied Taylor the Water-Poet with a scrap of verbose nonsense,* may be far from solitary, yet is Horne Tooke's assertion still true, that "it is much to be wished that an edition of Shakespeare were given *literatim* according to the first Folio."

A ready means of testing the soundness of this position may now be had: let the reader contrast Mr. Howard Staunton's edition of Shakespeare, or indeed any other,† with what, under that gentleman's supervision, is already reprinted by Day, and reprinted with unerring accuracy, from the edition by Heminge and Condell: of the verdict of the English scholar

* "Sir Gregory Nonsense his Newes from Noplace." Taylor's *Workes*, Ed. 1630, p. 1.

† The comparative accuracy of recent reprints of the 1st Folio forms no part of the question.

there cannot be a doubt. Nothing could surpass this reprint but what we have not got, and are not likely to have, a text selected with judgement from the earliest Quartos, and first Folio; their various readings given at foot, as well as the rare amendments, and passing rare they are, from later editions.

Horne Tooke inveighs against the dwarfish commentators of his time, but they are giants beside the punies of ours. Then increased acquaintance with the idioms of Shakespeare's day tended to uphold the original text, where now a more discursive, but superficial, ill-digested reading seems prone to blemish and unsettle it. With one or two distinguished exceptions, and those not always true to themselves, the modern explorers of Shakespeare's text, finding in it much that is to them uncouth both in thought and expression, love better to tax their ingenuity in guessing what he should have written by what they can apprehend, than to search painfully for what he meant by what he did write. *Poeta nascitur non fit*, is verified also of the critic: for one that is at the pains to qualify himself by research to interpret, a score undertake on one foot to re-write Shakespeare, and it is hard to determine whether the enterprise or its success is more to be admired. To correct *Magnificat*, and teach Shakespeare how to fashion his speech, have both one disease; and if the intensity of the disease may be gathered from the spread and aggravation of the symptoms, things are becoming worse and worse. Time was when Zachary Jackson appeared like an owl at mid-day, a sight to be won-

dered at; now he is in some repute, and has a host of copyists—indeed the Cambridge editors pronounce “the judgment of the Author of ‘Shakespeare’s genius justified’ worth all consideration,” and accordingly make up their hotchpot of various readings from trash of his, and of his copesmate, Andrew Beckett, the rank folly whereof disedges all relish for the toothsome Quarto and Folio collation, set before their guests in such ill neighbourhood. To patronise quacksalvers like them, and record their nostrums, belongs not to the masculine duty of an editor of Shakespeare, but savours strongly of the office assigned by Iago to his pattern woman, “to suckle fools and chronicle small beer.” Simple vain Zachary loved his own barn better than Shakespeare’s house; the smoke of his conceited noddle was pleasanter to his eyes than the clearest fire of his author’s intellect. So it fares with all the sort of them: professing to reverence the memory of Shakespeare, they violate his remains; the monument reared by his own genius they chip and deface, they plaster and daub, or in Zachary’s phrase “they justify,” and to get themselves a mention, they bescribble it all over with their names. The Cambridge editors appear to spare no pains to propagate this vainglorious itch; every additional volume brings its additional Jackson or Beckett. Nor is this prurient meddlesomeness, this hankering after notoriety confined to the illiterate rout, who subject the grey authority of the Folio to their childish alphabetical quirks; whose sole materials of

criticism are syllable and sound; their only organs of judgement, the eye and the ear; which shuffle 'gnat' into 'quat,' 'part' into 'dart,' 'broom' into 'brown,' 'degrees' into 'diseases,' 'Jupiter' into 'pulpiter;' empirics, whose acquaintance with an author does not so much as embrace the evidence supplied by his repeating and expounding of himself: no, its taint has infected those who have proceeded masters of their art, who, if they do not always, when they might, illustrate Shakespeare by Shakespeare, have yet for that purpose ransacked chap-books and broad-sheets, have scoured the by-ways and dark corners of contemporary literature, have served a lifelong apprenticeship to the subject, and both with their own countrymen and with foreigners are its recognised oracles.

Expende Hannibalem—put Mr. Collier into the scales; say what weight is to be attached to his appraisalment of a suspected reading, that can garnish an edition of Shakespeare, the consummate product of his maturest studies, with notes of this stamp? In Vol. 1. p. [265, he says of the Merchant of Venice—"there is a remarkable proof of its popularity in the work of a rival dramatist, Webster; it is in his "White Devil," (printed in 1612, but when first acted is uncertain), where Vittoria, on her trial, makes a reference to the heroine of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," and complains that she is

"So intangled in a cursed accusation,
That my defence, of force, like Portia's,
Must personate masculine virtue."

In the original editions Portia's is misprinted Perseus, but the Rev. Mr. Mitford suggested the excellent emendation, which the Rev. Mr. Dyce (i. p. 65) was too timid to adopt, though he had the courage to print nonsense."

It is Mr. Collier's hard lot never to display less erudition, or worse judgement, than when he is most peremptory and magisterial. To this suicidal attack upon him Mr. Dyce rejoins, "Mr. Mitford's conjecture, though Mr. Collier pronounces it "excellent," I believe to be unquestionably wrong. Apart from the extreme improbability that Webster would make Vittoria allude to a character in the Merchant of Venice—the passage itself shows that neither Shakespeare's Portia, nor (as I suggested in my second ed. of Webster) Portia, the wife of Brutus, is the person in question. Whoever that personage may have been, she like Vittoria had to offer a "defence against some heavy accusation" under which she laboured—as to the expression "masculine virtue" I may notice that Heywood in the Fifth Book of his Various Historie concernynge Women, p. 224. ed. 1624, treats "of warlike women and those of masculine virtue," but nothing is found there which throws any light on the speech of Vittoria."

Mr. Dyce may, according to Mr. Collier, have "had the courage to print nonsense," but sense or nonsense, he printed what Webster wrote; and though Mr. Mitford prefer Portia's to Perseus, and Mr. Collier dub it an "excellent emendation," yet since

Mr. Dyce undertook to edit Webster, not Mitford or Collier, and since Webster might not care to father Mitford and Collier's excellent emendation, as being of the mind that "a civil doctor" is not the fittest type of masculine virtue, Webster's readers, if he have any, should be left in undisturbed possession of what Webster wrote. Mr. Collier, among those *qui novo marmori ascribunt Praxitelem suo*, can manufacture and antedate a thousand new readings in Shakespeare, if such be his humour; and his readings may pass muster with Professor Mommsen, and the rest, who like Shakespeare accommodated to modern parlance, or recast in the grotesque mould of a Jackson or a Beckett. He can also, for lack of better, suborn evidence of the popularity of Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice out of Mr. Mitford's corruption of Webster's text, but he cannot avoid the proof that Webster wrote Perseus not Portia's. Let the reader turn to Jonson's "Masque of Queens celebrated from the house of fame by the Queen of Great Britain with her ladies at Whitehall, Feb. 2. 1609," three years before Webster's White Devil was printed, and he will find in it what Webster found before him, how "a person by this time descended in the furniture of Perseus, and expressing heroic and masculine virtue began to speak," with a note by the author that "the ancients expressed a brave and masculine virtue in three figures (of Hercules, Perseus, and Bellerophon) of which," adds he, "we choose that of Perseus armed as we have described him out

of Hesiod, Scut. Herc. See Apollodorus the grammarian, liber 2. de Perseo."

Webster's allusion may be far-fetched, and its wording somewhat queer, but otherwise where is the difficulty? Vittoria excuses herself for being forced to lay aside modesty and womanhood, and represents that in her defence she has been driven to set forth, like Perseus, the language and bearing of masculine virtue; in plain words, she says that she must conduct her defence with the rough vigour of a man (Perseus, not Bellario being her model) instead of the bashful weakness of a woman. The inference suggested by this dispute about Perseus appears to be, that one may edit Shakespeare twice without having read Ben Jonson once. And indeed his gratuitous discovery of the imperfect knowledge possessed by him of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Shirley, and Middleton, as well as of Ben Jonson, abundantly proclaims Mr. Collier's peculiar qualifications for his accomplished work, the disfigurement of Shakespeare. At p. 67 of Vol. 1. in a note on a line from Act 4. Sc. 1. of the *Tempest*, criticising Mr. Dyce's edition of Middleton's "*Spanish Gipsy*," he affirms in his dictatorial way—"on p. 196. 'rage' of the old copies ought to be 'rags,'" to which Mr. Dyce successfully retorts—"as to 'age' which I substituted for 'rage' of the old copies—

Alv.

"I could wish

For one hour's space I could pluck back from time
But thirty years, that in my fall

Thou might'st deserve report : now if thou conquer'st
 Thou canst not triumph, I'm half dead already
 Yet I'll not start a foot.

Louis.—Breathes there a spirit
 In such a heap of age ?”

The alteration is one of several important changes made with a pen in my copy of the first 4to by some early possessor, who, as he has also inserted additions to the text, had in all probability seen a manuscript of the play. The edition of 1816, like Mr. Collier, altered “rage” to “rags ;” but see the context ; and compare in “The Old Law” by Massinger, Middleton, and Rowley

“Take hence that pile of years.”

Act 2. Sc. 1.”

The context alone puts Mr. Collier's reading out of court, but his evil genius betrayed him to shew that he had overlooked, or forgotten, or never read to any purpose Beaumont and Fletcher's “Maid's Tragedy,” where, in Act 1. Sc. 2, the context is quite as tolerant of “rags,” as in Middleton's “Spanish Gipsy,” although “age” is not there misprinted “rage.”

Melantius.—“That heap of age which I should reverence
 If it were temperate ; but testy years
 Are most contemptible.”

The like may be observed of Shirley's “School of Complement.” Act 3. Sc. 1.

Selina.—“Whither had reason so withdrawn itself
 I could not make distinction of a man
 From such a heap of age, aches, and rheum ?”

Mr. Collier's rage for rags has led him to give

“rags” for “rage” (“rebellion—guarded with rage”) in Act 4. Sc. 1, of the 2nd part of K. Henry 4th, where, though he have Mr. Sidney Walker, Mr. Dyce, the Cambridge editors, and all the rest to abet him (Mr. Halliwell excepted) it will hereafter be shown that Heminge and Condell’s text is without “brack,” and not to be mended by “rags.”

It is not however of his country’s speech as employed in the writings of her dramatists alone, but universally, in what way soever transmitted, that Mr. Collier’s knowledge is defective; and he is so amusingly unconscious of it that he does not flinch from thrusting out of Shakespeare words met with every where besides, and introducing in their room others of his own coinage, or the refuse of some previous commentator. Thus in “Measure for Measure,” Act 5. Sc. 1, the Folio gives

“Make rash remonstrance of my hidden power.”

“Unquestionably the printer’s error,” says Mr. Collier, “for ‘demonstrance’: he used the wrong preposition. Shakespeare elsewhere has ‘demonstration’ and ‘demonstrate,’ but this is the only place where demonstrance occurs.” It is so; the only place; and Mr. Collier put it there, having borrowed it from Malone’s remark—“As I am not aware of remonstrance being used in this sense I would read demonstrance.” But though Malone knew no other instance, both he, and his editor, Boswell, kept the authentic word in the text: to drive it thence was reserved for Mr. Collier, who did know one. For just as Shake-

speare does here, so does Shirley in his "Hyde Park" use "remonstrance"—"another misprint for demonstration," ingeminates Mr. Collier, "the same carelessness of the old compositor as to the preposition having caused the error in both instances." But in Act 1. Sc. 2. of "The Imposture" by the same dramatist, as Mr. Dyce insists, the word is found again with a like meaning. Now would it not be marvellous if but thrice over "the carelessness of the old compositor as to the preposition" had, for a counterfeit of Malone's, caused the misprint of a sterling and current word; correctly stated by Mr. Grant White "to have come only comparatively of late years to mean expostulation"? Mr. Halliwell observes, "Remonstrance seems to be used here in a peculiar sense of show or discovery from the Latin 'monstro.'" Mr. Dyce relates that Gifford pronounces the word in this sense "catachrestic" (an epithet more applicable to half the words in our language) and that Walker asks, may not the word have been in use in the sense of "exhibition"? Behold, so probable to thinking is the use, that a mere metre-monger, dismounted from his hobby, can divine, and very little search, as will be seen, is needed to ascertain it.

How often, when his own reading does not bestead him, would recourse to his Dictionary spare many a commentator much idle speculation, even to the making what erewhile seemed extraordinary, or recondite, surprisingly common-place, and apparent!

And mark how Shakespeare's true text is needlessly bandied to and fro by neglect of this vicarious and cheap expedient. In 1859 Mr. Staunton edits "Measure for Measure," with "demonstrance" in the text, pursuant to Malone's suggestion and Collier's example; in 1863 the Cambridge editors register Mr. Staunton as the first to have made this change, (erroneously, that dull eminence was pre-occupied by Mr. Collier); in 1864 Mr. Staunton in a second edition replaces the original word, with the somewhat disingenuous foot-note: "So the old text, and rightly, though Malone and other writers persist in reading remonstrance." It is plain then that Malone's castaway was adopted both by Mr. Collier and Mr. Staunton; the one proud to father, the other now eager to disclaim all partnership in the foundling. But thus do orts and leavings of past editors become the main stock of present ones; and texts of the Folio which have run the gauntlet of more skilled judgements are held fit material on which to try the prentice hand. Both Johnson and Richardson adduce examples of the noun "remonstrance" in the not very abusive, nor yet uncommon sense of manifestation, or declaration. These being easily accessible need not be repeated here, but a few more shall be added for the sake of the insight they afford into the literary endowments, which, by popular allowance, license a scholiast or editor of Shakespeare to cashier the old text.

In the "Divil's Charter," by Barnabe Barnes, 1607, the Duke of Candy says,

"Those (warres) are the same they seeme, and in such warres
Your sonne shall make remonstrance of his valour,
And so become true champion of the Church."

ACT I. SC. 4. Sig. B. 3.

In "The Lost Lady," 1639, the "Physitian" says,

"makes his escape, and is received
Of the Spartana king with all remonstrances
Of love, and confess'd service."—P. 4.

In Taylor's Sermons, 1653-4, we find

"They that perished in the gainsaying of Corah were out of the condition of repentance ; but the people that were affrighted with the neighbourhood of the judgement, and the expresses of God's anger manifested in such visible remonstrances, they were the men called to repentance."—Page 162. Sermon. 13. Part 2.

In South's Posthumous Sermons, ed. 1744, we encounter

"No: the atheist is too wise in his generation to make remonstrances and declarations of what he thinks."—Sermon. 3. p. 78. Vol. 9.

Whatever be the authority of Barnes or Barclay, it cannot be denied that Taylor and South are good bail for Shakespeare's use of "remonstrance," though to Malone it be unexampled, to Gifford catachrestic, and to Halliwell peculiar. Neither must it be supposed that remonstrance is some abnormal birth, uncountenanced by other members of its family. Both Johnson and Richardson give instances of the verb, signifying to manifest, or declare ; and in Act 5. Sc. 2. of Jonson's "Every Man out of his Humour,"

Amorphus says, "Lo, you have given yourself the dor. But I will remonstrate to you the third dor, which is not as the two former dors, indicative but deliberative." So also Jeremy Taylor, "I did insist the longer upon this instance that I might remonstrate how great and how sure and how preserving (misprint for persevering) mercies a pious father of a family may derive upon his succeeding generations." Page 47. Serm. 4. Part 2. And again, "In order to which end my purpose now is to remonstrate to you the several states of sin and death together with those remedies which God had proportioned out to them." Page 199. Serm. 16. Part 1. We likewise find it in the translation of Rabelais by Urquhart and Motteux. Book 3. chap. 34: "to tell them in downright terms and to remonstrate to them (orig. remonstrant), with a great show of detestation of a crime so horrid, how their husbands were jealous." At page 116 of the English Mirrour, by George Whetstones, 1586, we meet with "remonstration," and at page 12 of "Death's Sermon unto the Living," by Charles Fitz-Geffry, 1662, we meet with "remonstrable," "thus you see the Doctrine is for evidence most remonstrable."

If then Horace's rule hold good, enough, and more than enough, has been alleged to vindicate Shakespeare, Heminge and Condell, Jaggard, and the old compositor, and to negative Gifford's charge of catachresis, as well as Halliwell's notion of peculiarity. But to sift the subject to the bottom, ab-

solutely to justify this employment of the word remonstrance, to shew that it is genuine and proper, as well as that it was customary and received, it may be asked; is there any solecism in the composition of the verbs "revere" or "resolve"? or will it be said that "recommend" and "recompense" are open to objection, because classical Latin knows no such compounds as "recommendo" or "recompenso"? On the same ground is there catachresis in "revestry" or "regreet"? Cannot an actuary in casting accounts "rebate," or when hungry take his "repast," and speak so too, without abuse of speech? Gifford would not and Mr. Collier cannot deny that "renie" and "renege" were once in use, ("denege" never), where now, "renegade" excepted, forms with the prefix 'de' are only prevalent. And it is worthy of remark that although Vossius devotes two chapters, the 20th and 21st in his 4th book de vitiis sermonis, to compounds of 're,' wherein he affirms "Renego pro nego, denego plane culpandum;" yet, whether from oversight or not, he makes no mention of "remonstro," a compound as little occurring in good Latin as "renego," but in middle and low Latin by no means hard to meet with. Besides the passages cited by Du Cange under the words "Remonstrantia" and "Remonstrare" take the two following: In a note, Book 2. chap. 6. of Rabelais by Urquhart and Motteux, explaining why the Limosins are called turnip-eaters, the gloss quotes John Hotman as reporting of them, that "cum audirent quod papa erat

vicarius Dei, immo quod ipsemet erat Deus (ut patet per canonistas) miserunt sibi legationem ad remonstrandam paupertatem patriæ suæ, in qua fere nihil crescit præter rapas et castaneas." And in Part 3. Sec. 2. Memb. 2. Subs. 1. of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, he has in a note "Tho. Campanella *Astrologiæ*, lib. 4. cap. 8. articulis 4 and 5 insaniam amatoriam remonstrantia multa præ cæteris accumulat aphorismata."

And now, if it were not an ungracious office to lecture a patriarch pupil, and bid him new-learn his lesson, notwithstanding the entire league between formal ignorance and grave obstinacy one might fairly call upon Mr. Collier to do "the old compositor" right by undoing the wrong which in this instance at all events, unless he would put out his own, as well as other people's eyes, he must know that the Queen's English has sustained at his hands. That gentleman's Shakespeare is not specially under review, but the labour of a life devoted to the task, and the manner in which it has at last been executed by him, warrant the prominence given to its blots in these introductory remarks; of which one design is to exhibit the degeneracy of the existing breed of expositors. Among the comments of those who ranked highest in an older and abler race nothing like the blemishes, thick strewn throughout Mr. Collier's last edition, nothing simile aut secundum is anywhere to be found. The names of Theobald, Steevens, and Malone would have slept in the same

grave, to which their coevals and posterity have justly consigned the memories of Jackson and Beckett, had they wrought no better for the elucidation of Shakespeare, and therewithal for the rescue of good English from the mongrel character which conceit and ignorance are ever bent to impress upon it. To clear up an obscurity the approved practice was to borrow light from Shakespeare's time-fellows, where none was reflected by himself, and not without more ado to proscribe every hard saying as spurious; or to assume a misprint, jostle out the old reading, and foist into its place whatever Hob or Dick may judge fittest. Day by day we are more and more receding from the phraseology of Shakespeare's age, and so new difficulties are daily raised, new changes in the text proposed to meet the usage of the hour; with these has grown up, if they have not given rise to it, a taste for cavilling and cobbling, nicknamed acute and felicitous, but in truth the poor make-believe of a shallow unlettered criticism: to this taste Mr. Collier has catered, in his last edition of Shakespeare, with a prodigality by so much more censurable, as it is more mischievous, than the slavish adherence to the old copies, which for the most part marked his first. He has reversed the characteristics of life's gradation. ("degrees," one dare not say for one's head, because of its affinity, both in letters and sound, to "diseases." K. Henry 4th. Part 2. Act. 1. Sc. 2.) In him the caution of youth has been succeeded by the rashness of age; the once crabbed

textuary, that was wont to blanch the most glaring misprints, is now become the licentious innovator to brand the sincerest readings. It is then of Mr. Collier, as the representative and ringleader of a school injurious to Shakespeare, to the old drama, and to the integrity of the English language, that this notice has been taken; it is because his authority has exercised a contagious influence upon minds that should have been proof against its working; because, as shall be forthwith indicated, an editor of Shakespeare, qualified above all others for the office, has not escaped its blight.

Appositely enough, as some no doubt will think, the case exhibiting an instance of this, and which we are now about to canvass, is from "Much ado about Nothing:" though the statement be somewhat prolix, the reader will be in fault if it does not prove instructive also. In Act 5. Sc. 1. of that play, according to the Quarto (1600), and the Folio, we read—

"Scambling, outfacing, fashion-monging boys."

In the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Folios, three in number, but one in effect, each faultier than its predecessor, and none of any authority, as likewise in all the modern editions down to Mr. Knight's, "fashion-monging" becomes "fashion-mong'ring." It is not a matter of any importance which mode of spelling may be adopted, so far as the sense is concerned, but Shakespeare being in the hands and on the lips of all,

upon his writings, next to our version of the Bible, and to the book of Common Prayer, depend the perpetuation of old, and the defence of calumniated English. What avails it that "monging" is found in the "Funeralles of King Edward the Syxt," 1560.

"Your monging of vitayles, corne, butter and cheese."

In the "Coblers Prophecie," 1594.

"And the money monging mate with all his knaverie."—

Sig. B. 3.

In Lord Brooke's "Treatise of Religion," composed many years before, but first printed in 1670.

"Book learning, arts, yea school divinity

New types of old law-monging Pharisies."—Stanza 67.

In Gee's "New Shreds of the Old Snare," 1624.

"But the Pope's benediction, or any the least touch of sainting, miracle-monging fiction is able to infuse the highest worth into the basest baggagely new-nothing to hang upon the sleeve of admiring, adoring, ghostly children of the Jesuites."—Pp. 49-50. What avail these, or any number of like instances, buried in writers that are never read? Banish the true and genuine form "monging" from Shakespeare, it becomes an outcast from our language, and leaves a gap in the eldest branch of a most useful family of words.

"Monging" is the present participle regularly inflected from the Anglo-Saxon verb 'mangian' to traffick: in the example cited above from Baldwin it is the very same word as "mangung," merchandise. Again from the verb mangian we get "monger,"

now used only in composition, but in Shakespeare's time occurring as a simple noun, *e.g.* in Ben Jonson's "Tale of a Tub."

Hills. "Here was no subtle device to get a wench!
This chanon has a brave pate of his own,
A shaven pate, and a right monger y'vaith."

Act 2. Sc. 1.

In Philemon Holland's translation of "Plinies Naturall History," 1600. "Againe it falleth out that sometime one rich munger or other (*prævalens maniceps*) buying up a commoditie, and bringing it wholly into his owne hands for to have the monopolie of it raiseth the market and enhaunceth the price."—Book 33, p. 485. Notwithstanding these examples, and no doubt others might be adduced, the separate subsistence of "monger" will be found on reference to our Grammarians and Lexicographers to be denied by some, and questioned by most of them. Within twenty years after Holland's translation, the learned but crotchety master of St. Paul's School, Alexander Gil, in the chapter on compounds of his "*Logonomia Anglica*," ed. 1619, says, "munger inseparabile est & illum denotat qui rem venalem habet ut fishmunger, cetarius." Somner attaches some sort of authority to this idle assertion. Lye calls the word old English still found in composition. Johnson cautiously says "monger is seldom or never used alone," while Todd quotes the passage from the "Tale of a Tub," and adds that "Wicliffe, he thinks, uses it somewhere in the good sense of a trader."

As to "mongering," that form also is quite legitimate, being the present participle of "mangheren," termed by Kilian an old low Dutch word; but why should an inflection from the more elementary and indigenous root be shouldered out by one from what is in all likelihood but an offshoot from it?

In justice to the several annotators and editors of Shakespeare it is desirable, however tiresome, that their comments should be set before the reader. Malone notices indeed that the "old copies,"—meaning the Quarto and Folio, for he was too sagacious so to designate the three Folio republications that followed—read "monging," yet he put mong'ring in his text: to Mr Knight is due the credit of restoring the true form, with this brief and sensible note—"Fashion-monging," so the original copies; but always altered to fashion-mong'ring. The participle of the Anglo-Saxon verb meaning to trade, would give us monging; as the verb gives us the noun signifying a trader—"monger." Vol. 2. p. 444. He is followed by Mr. Halliwell, with a note to the same effect, and by the Cambridge editors, who, with their usual fidelity, the highest praise of their work, ascribe "monging" to the Quarto and Folio, "mongering" to the three subsequent editions. Mr. Collier's is a pattern note; the whole piece, his edition of 1856, for spirit, veracity, and scholarship, sorts with it. "The Rev. A. Dyce," says he, "in his 'Few notes,' &c. p. 46, would have this compound spelt 'fashion-monging,' merely because he so finds it in Wilson's

‘Cobler’s Prophecie,’ 1594. This is to desert the etymology of the word ; and the same reason would require adherence to every old and exploded form in any other word. In Wilson’s comedy we may be pretty sure that the letter ‘r’ in mong’ring was accidentally omitted.” Vol. 2. p. 71. Upon this note of Mr. Collier’s the subjoined comment is made by Mr. Dyce in his edition now in progress. “In my Few Notes, &c., p. 46, I have said, “Here Mr. Knight alone of the modern editors follows the old copies in printing fashion-monging—and rightly, &c. : but now in considering the inconsistency in spelling which those old copies exhibit, I think that the other modern editors have done more wisely. Mr. Collier in the second edition of his Shakespeare writes thus on the present passage—(see above)—one of Mr. Collier’s many unprincipled attempts to render me ridiculous in the eyes of his readers ; few of whom could be expected to know (what Mr. Collier could not fail to know) that in the present passage all the old editions, the quarto and the four folios (Mr. Dyce is mistaken about the three last) are uniform in having “fashion-monging.” Vol. 2. p. 155. It is to be regretted that Mr. Dyce should have veiled his first and sounder judgement to Mr. Collier’s worthless assertion ; it is yet more to be regretted that either Mr. Collier, or any one else, that thinks himself competent to edit Shakespeare, should ever dream that even with the credulous and illiterate his bare word will either avouch or refute an etymology, or that his surmise

about letters dropt out, or prepositions mistook, will countervail manifold evidence that nothing of the kind has occurred.

Before commencing a detailed and orderly comparison of the four editions of Shakespeare now issuing from the Press, namely, the reprint of Heminge and Condell's by Staunton, Halliwell's, the Cambridge, and Dyce's, with others in highest repute, it only remains to make good what was affirmed, that in interpreting Shakespeare his readers seem to have lost the power to follow the same rules of construction as they observe when writing themselves, or interpreting what is written by each other. To exemplify this, we will take a particular but not a rare usage of the three propositions "in," "to," and "into," which have altogether caused more spilth of ink (for every drop has been wasted) than might suffice to comment Shakespeare from title-page to colophon.

Hard above all has been the fate of 'in'; let but Iago say that for soldiership his comrade Cassio is "a fellow almost damned in a fair wife"—that his qualifications for the post of lieutenant would be almost discreditable in a woman; let him add withal, as though on set purpose to preclude every chance of being misunderstood, that Cassio possesses no more strategic knowledge than "a spinster," when lo! a goodly troop of commentators, clerk and lay, bishop and bookseller, lawyer and antiquary, critic professional and critic amateur, home-born and outlandish, men who have read much, and men who

have read nothing, swarm forth to bury this simple remark under a pile of notes, that from first to last contain not an inkling of its purport. The passage is well known, but it will be of service to bring it under the reader's eye.

“ (A fellow almost damn'd in a faire wife)
That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the devision of a battle knowes
More then a spinster.” *Othello*, Act 1. Sc. 2.

The words are to be taken circumscriptly, not sent gadding after Bianca, or no one knows who; their meaning must be sought and found within the compass of the line in which they stand. Had Shakespeare written “A fellow almost damned in a raw lad,” the dullest brain could scarcely have missed the imputation that Cassio's military abilities would be almost disallowed, condemned as hardly up to the mark in an inexperienced boy: or had the words run, “a fellow almost damned in an old maid,” then, though it might not be understood how an officer, after Iago's report, of Cassio's incapacity, should be almost damned in one of her sex and condition, she at any rate could not, like the “fair wife,” have been discovered at Cyprus in a young courtesan. Or not altering a syllable, with only a slight change in their order, let us place the words thus;

“A fellow in a fair wife almost damned,”

by this disposition of them, the reader is pinned to their true construction: the alliance between Cassio and the fair wife is closer than the commentators

suspected; they harp upon conjugal union, Iago speaks of virtual identity; they seek the coupling of two persons in wedlock, he contemplates an embodiment of the soldiership of the one in the condition of the other, and so incorporated he pronounces it to be "in a fair wife" almost reproveable; adding, in the same vein, that it was no better than might be found in "a spinster." To dwell on this point longer would be to upbraid the reader's understanding.

Although however its sense has lain hid, the authentic reading of Heminge and Condell maintains its ground, their "wife" having outfaced Hammer's "phiz"—"a fellow almost damned in a fair phiz," and outlived Tyrwhitt's "life," so well spoken of by Steevens and Ritson, the "spinster" quite forgot. Mr. Grant White has indeed printed "wise" for "wife;" without any meaning, but solely because the long *s* and *f* are often confounded: thus does every one "play at loggats" with Shakespeare's remains.

Touching the next preposition "to," it has not been so unlucky; if it be a sore stumbling-block in that line of the Duke's address to Escalus, "But that to your sufficiency as your worth is able," still a general, albeit hazy conception of the sense has been arrived at: and notwithstanding its vitiation by some editors and its question by all, both the line itself, and the whole speech to which it belongs, may, if any other, be safely upheld to have

been recorded by Heminge and Condell precisely as it was penned by Shakespeare: for no one text can there be amassed such overpowering testimony: it is thrust upon you from all sides; in Shakespeare himself it is not wanting, and in writers both of prose and verse, before, at, and after his time volumes of proof may be had. Reserving it on account of its length for another occasion, we shall conclude with the case of the preposition "into," as it occurs in Act 1. Sc. 2, of the "Tempest," thus given by Heminge and Condell:—

"Like one
Who hauing into truth, by telling of it,
Made such a synner of his memorie
To credite his owne lie, he did beleue
He was indeed the Duke."

Now it should be premised that the punctuation of the Folio, like most books of its date, is faulty, and not otherwise to be regarded than as it tends to support, or at all events not to overthrow the sense: to read "Good:" in the third line of this play, "Good: speake to the mariners:" with the pause indicated by a colon; or to read "For why?" in the 11th verse of the 16th Psalm, and the 41st verse of the 105th Psalm (old version) as a question, though printed with a mark of interrogation, whether sanctioned or not by Cowper in his "John Gilpin," or by Henderson's recitation of that ballad, betokens ignorance not only of the old capricious punctuation, but of the significance of phrases in vulgarest use. On

the other hand, it sometimes happens that the pointing in the original copies preserves the sense, which modern editors have hopelessly stopped out. Take a notable example in "Measure for Measure," Act 4. Sc. 2. The Duke exhibits a letter to the Provost, and says, "The contents of this is the returne of the Duke; you shall anon over-reade it at your pleasure: where you shall finde within these two daies, he will be heere. This is a thing that Angelo knowes not, for hee this very day receives letters of strange tenor, perchance of the Duke's death, perchance entering into some monasterie, but by chance nothing of what is writ." So Heminge and Condell, reprinted without variance of speck or dot, by Mr. Staunton. All modern editors point the concluding words thus—"but, by chance, nothing of what is writ;"—then having by their pointing extinguished the sense, some corrupt, all misinterpret the sentence. Hanmer, at Warburton's instance, and Warburton, interpolating the adverb, "here," print "here writ:" in his present edition Mr. Dyce follows them: Mr. Halliwell makes no addition to the old text beyond the fatal commas. So also the Cambridge editors. But Mr. Halliwell gives it a most portentous meaning: like Mr. Staunton, who, having newly turned "prenzie" into "reverend"; therein only keeps decorum, he makes out that "writ" is here "holy writ," and signifies "truth;" because we say, to take for writ or gospel, *i. e.* take for true, therefore in this place, "nothing of what is writ," amounts to "nothing of what is true." So

that according to editors and commentators, past and present, Shakespeare makes the Duke positively affirm that Angelo knew not of his coming, that on the contrary he had that very day received letters of strange tenor, letters purposely designed to mislead him; and then in the same breath makes the Duke allege that it was by chance Angelo did not know "the truth," that it was by chance he did not know the contents of the letter in his hand, which announced the Duke's return within two days. This is to outbrave Shakespeare, not to expound him: this is to put Shakespeare not only not to speak like Shakespeare, but not even like one that knew his own mind. Let the reader be assured Shakespeare is justly chargeable with no such contradiction. According to Heminge and Condell the Duke tells the Provost that in Angelo's letters of strange tenor everything is written conjecturally, perchance of the Duke's death, perchance entering into some monastery, "but by chance nothing of what is writ," *i.e.* except as a matter of chance nothing of what is writ—nothing of what is writ in the letters received by Angelo is set down otherwise than uncertainly.

Here happily, as in other places not a few, is no room for cogging in words to get a meaning, no room for experimenting on resemblance of letters, or the clink of syllables: your critic ocular and auricular is baffled; unable to ring his changes of "close" into "glose," "remonstrance" into "demonstrance," "crime" into "grime," "a point" into "report,"

“sob” into “bob” or “fob” (a change at which all Shakespeare’s boys laughed in amazement), the verbal pedlar is out of his element, groping in the darkness which envelopes every one unfamiliar with such constructions as do not survive in modern literature.

In the above example from “Measure for Measure” we have seen how, as Chaucer sings, “the reader that pointeth ill, a good sentence may oft spill;” that in fact the sense has been lost by the addition of points absent in the Folio; but its common fault in punctuation is on the side of excess: such is the case in the passage from the *Tempest*; the line,—“who having into truth, by telling of it,” has a comma too much; for the construction is, “telling of it into truth.” There exists little or no difference of opinion as to the general purport of the whole passage, which is understood to convey the same thought as these words in South’s 8th Sermon, p. 305. Vol. 2. ed. 1697. “like those who by often repeating a lie to others come at length to believe it themselves,” or as expressed more at large, in Ford’s Play, by King Henry, touching the impostor Perkin Warbeck;

“The lesson prompted and well conn’d was moulded
Into familiar dialogue, oft rehearsed,
Till learnt by heart, ’tis now received for truth.”

Act 5. Sc. 2.

But though the sentiment be trivial, the vulgar construction in this place—“a sinner into truth,” for a sinner against truth,—has never been paralleled, and until that be done, no good reason can be given

why a different syntax, neither strained, nor infrequent, should not prevail.

Perhaps the ensuing extracts will help to facilitate the apprehension of words so joined as in—"telling of it into truth." "After a further quantity of useless butchery and carnage, and after the innumerable hospitals have been some more times filled and emptied, this truth will grow into a familiar fact, and the next thing then necessary will be to have ready prepared some feasible line of frontier which may also be *discussed into familiarity*."—The *Times*, Oct. 10, 1862. "Why thus also it is with the mind of man: after he is offended, if he will not be brought to discharge his thoughts of the offence, he may think and think so long, till he has *thought a distasteful apprehension into an action of murder*."—South, Sermon. 9. p. 281. Vol. 10. ed. 1744. "For bring all the force of rhetoric in the world, yet *vice can never be praised into virtue*."—Ibid. Sermon. 8. p. 190. Vol. 8. This use of the preposition "into," with a like use, in a contrary sense, of the preposition "out of," occurs in South above a score times; so that a perusal of that Divine's sermons alone would train the reader to an easy recognition of Shakespeare's "telling a lie into truth." But although more frequent in South than any other writer, it is by no means peculiar to him. Ben Jonson in his "Time Vindicated" has:

" *Swears him into name,*

Upon his word and sword, for the sole youth
Dares make profession of poetic truth
Now militant amongst us."

And in his "Underwoods,"

" Keep you such
That I may love your person, as I do,
Without your gift, though I can rate that too
By *thanking thus the courtesy to life*
Which you will bury."

Epistle to Sir Edw. Sackville.

Of these illustrations of the syntax ascribed to "into" in the line quoted from the *Tempest*, the extract from the *Times* testifies to its continued use, and all of them corroborate it. "To tell a lie into truth," the language here attributed to Shakespeare is not a whit more forced or ungrammatical than "to discuss a frontier into familiarity," "to think an apprehension into an action," "to praise vice into virtue," "to swear a youth into name," or "to thank a courtesy to life."

Prospero's observation amounts to this; that a man may forge a lie, and repeat it until it passes with him into truth, his memory thereby losing at each repetition some part of its sense of the original falsehood, until it has, in that respect, become such a sinner, has so far transgressed its duty, and foregone its office, that the man credits the lie of which he had been himself the author. But surely we burn daylight; the lines are clearer than exposition; comment and paraphrase only obscure them. For those who reject the construction asserted here, and are still disposed to maintain that "sinner into truth" is right, it behoves them to furnish at least

one sample of the usage they assume. They are to show that "a sinner into truth" is equivalent to "a sinner against truth." Let them then address themselves to the task, and to be successful, for it is not the work of a day, let them do so horse and foot, or in our grandsires' phrase, the meaning of which, as of very many other of their sayings, has perished with them, let them do so "for the heavens." In the meantime it will be safer with Halliwell, Dyce, and the Cambridge editors to repeal Heminge and Condell's banished text, which is much likelier to be genuine than the reading "unto" for "into," a corruption introduced by Warburton, and espoused by his successors of greatest note.

Vying with Warburton, Mr. Collier, in his attempt to expedite this knot, has by a further corruption knocked out the brains of the entire passage. What before imported but an error of construction he has sublimed into stark staring nonsense, not only not Shakespeare's sense, which theretofore had still been substantially saved, but into no man's sense, into sheer fatuity. It was universally admitted that according to Shakespeare a liar by lying made his memory a sinner against "truth;" no, prints Mr. Collier, in contempt of Shakespeare, of his editors, and commentators, and of all reason, "a sinner against untruth;" that is, a liar, by commission of it sins against the sin he commits; a sinner, by leasing

trespasses against leasing, his sin ; in a word, a sinner by the sin sins against the sin.

Referring to this improvement of Shakespeare by Collier, Mr. Staunton intimates that "it has not received the attention it deserves:" verily the Cambridge editors are absolved ; Jackson and Beckett are not after all such scandals to criticism.

"Those 'foolish' creatures yet do look well favoured
When others are more 'foolish ;' not being the worst
Stands in some rauk of praise."

Reckless of the absurdity entailed, and bent only upon obtaining an antecedent close at hand before the pronoun "it" Mr. Collier crops the syllable "un" from Warburton's "unto," and claps it before "truth." No doubt in this syllabic legerdemain there was a certain politic drift ; for had not Steevens, Mason, Malone, and Knight pronounced the sentence to be ungrammatical or involved ? Was not the pronoun "it" adjudged to be without a correlative ? and does not the quintessence of Journal literature esteem Priscian's head more than a little scratched by relative and antecedent standing so far apart, and in preposterous order too ? Sure Shakespeare was ill-advised to set "it," the pronoun, foremost, at the beginning, and "lie," its noun, hindmost, at the end of the sentence !

Now what may be forgiven to weakness offended by the unusual distance between noun and pronoun, and the postposition of the antecedent in Prospero's speech, becomes insufferable when a greater weak-

ness, in the absence of any stumbling-block, mounts into the scorner's seat, and denounces as bad grammar this reversed order of noun and pronoun, or relative and antecedent, although not only common in every writer of our own language, good, bad, and indifferent, but common in every language with which we are acquainted.

In the *Saturday Review*, a periodical that numbers among its contributors, linguists, who, on their own showing, might appear to have rocked the cradle, and to understand the first lisps of articulate speech, to whom Psammitichus with his goats is a mere novice in the origin of tongues, there may be found every now and then supercilious glancings at the grammar of its contemporaries. Thus in its number of the 7th of Jan. '65, a cynic, snarling at an article in the *Times* upon the disappearance of the natives of Tasmania, fleers between brackets at the grammatical composition of the following sentence—"a charioteer who had been arrested by the Emperor was very popular with them, (*the only antecedent word is Thessalonica*) and the inhabitants were therefore assembled at the Hippodrome under the pretext of witnessing the races, and were then barbarously massacred, &c."

To say nothing of the ignorance of the figure metonymy betrayed by this critic, on finding in the same article Attica represented by Athens, it is pitiable to think that University training should disqualify a pupil for seeing in "the inhabitants" an antecedent

to "them;" that his classics, his *verbum personale*, should deprive him of all other notion of antecedency than what consists in a verbal sequence; that profundity and freedom of thought, the boastful prerogatives of your *Saturday Reviewer*, should be overawed and cowed by a term of art, and a grammatical symbol held paramount to the principles of which it, in common with others of the same mint, is but a lame and inadequate exponent. To be so logical it is a wonder that these writers stick so much in the rind of the letter of their grammar rules, that they are not on that very account led to a truer appreciation of the spirit of them. However it is quite obvious that the sagacity which is at fault, and cannot scent its way through the two particles "and the" to an antecedent for "them" of the *Times'* article, would have a hopeless hunt over a file of words eleven deep for an antecedent to "it" in the passage from the *Tempest*.

Conversant only with rectilinear stereotyped English, and for his theory of what it ought to be beholden to a style modelled upon his limited experience of what it is, your hide-bound scholar would make the "foot the tutor," just as though every custom in the common law of speech were over-ridden by certain compendious grammatical statutes, which are at most but declaratory of that, and being framed in general and comprehensive terms admit of a thousand exceptions: he does not understand that the marshalling of words, except in the most primitive and rudimentary essays, is not invariably regulated by their

dependence on each other, as that is defined in syntactical formulæ: he is unfitted to apprehend how by the transposition of noun and pronoun, or relative and antecedent, inharmonious clumsiness of construction may be avoided, and thought kept on its way in more uninterrupted, even flow, without sacrifice of lucidity. But he can libel Shakespeare, and his mother tongue; he can prate, as if no one were capable of inditing current English without the intervention of their fescue whose childish puberty is not yet emancipated from the pedagogue's ferule.

If any think lightly of these verbal questions to which Shakespeare's text has given rise, or count the time spent on them ill bestowed, let him bethink him of the philosopher's maxim, *τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθημάτων σύμβολα*: let him reflect that words are both the canal and criteria of thought; that to ascertain a speaker's meaning you must first understand his speech; and that that will not be mastered, where either by gross anachronism the properties of a language at epochs three centuries apart are blindly confused, or its artless exorbitancies girthed with the strait belt of pedantic canons.

Successive expositors of Shakespeare have run tracing each other along the groove of both these errors, every fresh relay propagating the faults it inherited and bequeathing more of its own. Hence their commentaries are chiefly valuable, where they possess any value at all, for graduating the several

stages of departure from its former self which the English language has travelled through since the days of Rowe, and for announcing the occasional recovery of superannuated idioms which at a later period has from time to time been achieved by some few of head-piece extraordinary. And yet it will not cost much pains to show that, with the command of libraries and of printing which we now enjoy, Shakespeare ought to be better edited, better understood, than he ever has been since his fellows Heminge and Condell first enriched their country with the dearest heirloom that it owns. This shall be the labour of the following chapters.

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THE SUCCESSION
OF
SHAKSPERE'S WORKS
ꝑc.

THE SUCCESSION
OF
SHAKSPERE'S WORKS

AND THE USE OF
METRICAL TESTS IN SETTLING IT, &c.

BEING THE INTRODUCTION TO
PROFESSOR GERVINUS'S 'COMMENTARIES ON SHAKSPERE'
TRANSLATED BY MISS BUNNÈTT

(Smith, Elder, & Co., 1874)

BY

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INTRODUCTION.¹



‘It is a disgrace to England, that even now, 258 years after Shakspeare’s death, the study of him has been so narrow, and the criticism, however good, so devoted to the mere text and its illustration, and to studies of single plays, that no book by an Englishman exists which deals in any worthy manner with Shakspeare as a whole, which tracks the rise and growth of his genius from the boyish romanticism or the sharp youngmanishness of his early plays, to the magnificence, the splendour, the divine intuition, which mark his ablest works. The profound and generous “Commentaries” of Gervinus—an honour to a German to have written, a pleasure to an Englishman to read—is still the only book known to me that comes near the true treatment and the dignity of its subject, or can be put into the hands of the student who wants to know the mind of Shakspeare.’

These words were written by me in the autumn of 1873, when I founded ‘The New Shakspeare Society,’ and have appeared in that Society’s Prospectus up to this day. Their truth has been confirmed by all the best judges to whom I have spoken about Gervinus’s ‘Commentaries’ since. One of the ablest of these, my friend Professor J. R. Seeley—a student of Shakspeare from his youth—said, on returning the book to me, ‘The play of *Cymbeline* had always puzzled me; and now, for the first time, Gervinus has explained it. I could not have believed before, that any man could have taught me, at my time of life, so much about one of Shakspeare’s plays. It is all clear now.’ In Germany Gervinus’s book still holds its ground as the best æsthetic work on our great poet, and is respected by all thoughtful men.

My strong conviction of its value leads me, however unworthy for the task, to say now a few words of recommendation of the book to my English fellow-students of Shakspeare, and to note, for the use of beginners, a few points that may help them in their work: 1. On Gervinus’s book. 2. On the change in Shakspeare’s metre as he advanced in life.

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and on 'Metrical Tests.' 3. On the spurious portions of plays call'd Shakspeare's, and the use of metrical tests in detecting them. 4. On noting the progressive changes in Shakspeare's language, imagery, and thought. 5. On the succession of Shakspeare's plays. 6. On the helps for studying them. I want just to tell a beginner now, what I wish another student had told me when I began to read Shakspeare.

§ 1. Most Englishmen who read Shakspeare are content to read his plays in any haphazard order, to enjoy and admire them—some greatly, some not much—without any thought of getting at the meaning of them, and at the man who lies beneath them; without any notion of tracing the growth of his mind, from its first upshoot till the ripening of its latest fruits. Yet this is not the way in which the works of SHAKSPEARE, the chief glory of English literature, should be studid. Carefully and faithfully is every Englishman bound to follow the course of the most splendid imagination of his land, and to note its purpose in every mark it leaves of its march. Shakspeare *must* be studied chronologically, and as a whole. In this task the student will get most real and welcome help from Professor Gervinus. The Professor starts with Shakspeare's earliest poems, the *Venus and Adonis*, (full of passion and of Stratford country life), and *Lucrece*, (of which Chaucer's *Troylus* must surely have been the model); then reviews his life in London,—wild in its early days,—and the condition of the stage when Shakspeare joind it; next, his earliest dramatic attempts, his touchings of *Titus Andronicus* (*Pericles* must be put later), and *Henry VI.*, Part I., and his recast of 2 and 3 *Henry VI.*; with his farces *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Then the works of his Second Period, in four divisions: 1. His erotic or love-pieces. 2. His historical plays. 3. His comedies of *The Merry Wives*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado*, and *Twelfth Night*. 4. His Sonnets. Next, the Professor treats the great Third Period of Shakspeare's Tragedies, headed by the tragi-comedy *Measure for Measure*, and winding-up with the purposeful and peaceful comedies of later age, *The Tempest* and *Winter's Tale*, and *Henry VIII.*, which (says Mr. Spedding) Shakspeare plannd, but wrote less than half of (1,166 lines), Fletcher writing the rest (1,761 lines).

Shakspeare's course is thus shown to have run from the amorousness and fun of youth, through the strong patriotism of early manhood, to the wrestling with the dark problems that beset the man of middle age to the time of gloom which weighd on Shakspeare (as on so many men) in later life, when, though outwardly successful, the world seemd all against him, and his mind dwelt with sympathy on scenes of faithlessness of friends, treachery of relations and subjects, ingratitude of children, scorn of his kind; till at last, in his Stratford home again, peace came to him, *Miranda* and *Perdita* in their lovely freshness and charm greeted him, and he was laid by his quiet Avon's side.

In his last section, 'Shakespeare,' Gervinus sets before us his view of the poet and his works as a whole, and rightly claims for him the highest honour as the greatest dramatic artist, the rarest judge of men and human affairs, the noblest moral teacher, that Literature has yet known.

What strikes me most in Gervinus is his breadth of culture and view, his rightness and calmness of judgment, his fairness in looking at both sides of a question, his noble earnest purpose, his resolve to get at the deepest meaning of his author, and his reverence and love for Shakspeare. No one can read his book without seeing evidence of a range of reading and study rare indeed among Englishmen. No one can fail to notice how his sound judgment at once puts the new ¹ 'Affaire du Collier,'—the Perkins folio forgeries, &c.,—in its true light; how he rejects the ordinary biographer's temptation—to which so many English Shakspeareans yield—of making his hero an angel; how he takes the plain and natural meaning of the 'Sonnets' as their real one, and yet shows us Shakspeare rising from his vices to the height of a great teacher of men. No one can fail to see how Gervinus, noble-natured and earnest himself, is able to catch and echo for us the 'still small voice' of Shakspeare's hidden meaning even in the lightest of his plays. No Englishman can fail to feel pleasure in the heartfelt tribute of love and praise that the great Historian of German Literature gives to the English Shakspeare.

No doubt the book has shortcomings, if not faults. It is German, and occasionally cumbrous; it has not the fervour and glow, or the delicacy and subtlety, of many of Mrs. Jameson's Studies; it does not do justice to Shakspeare's infinite humour and fun; it makes, sometimes, little odd mistakes.² But still it is a noble and generous

¹ The old forgeries printed by Mr. Collier as genuine were the documents from the Ellesmere (or Bridgewater House) and Dulwich College Libraries, a State Paper, and the latter additions to the Dulwich Letters (see Dr. Ingleby's *Complete View*). I, in common with many other men, have examined the originals with his prints of them. Mr. Collier printed one more name to one document than was in it when produc'd. See Mr. A. E. Brae's opinion at p. 13 of 'Collier, Coleridge, and Shakespeare: a Review, by the Author of "Literary Cookery,"' 1860. None of Mr. Collier's statements should be trusted till they have been verified. The entries of the actings of Shakspeare's Plays in Mr. Peter Cunningham's 'Revels at Court' (Shakespeare Society, 1842), pp. 203-5, 210-11, are also printed from forgeries (which Sir T. Duffus Hardy has shown me), though Mr. Halliwell says he has a transcript of some of the entries, made before Mr. Cunningham was born. Thus the following usually relied-on dates are forged: 1605, *Moor of Venis*, *Merry Wives*, *Measure for Measure*, *Errors*, *Love's Labours Lost*, *Henry V.*, *Merchant of Venice*. 1612, *Tempest*, *Winter's Tale*.

² Professor Seeley notices three:—1. In the comment on 1 *Henry IV.* Gervinus takes as literal and serious (p. 309) Hotspur's humorous exaggeration of Mortimer's keeping him *nine hours* listening to devils' names:

I tell you what:

He held me last Night at least nine howres

In reckning vp the seuerall Deuils Names

That were his Lackueyes. (111. i. 155-8, *Folio*, p. 61, col. 1.)

book, which no true lover of Shakspeare can read without gratitude and respect.

§ 2. Though Gervinus's criticism is mainly æsthetic,¹ yet, in settling the dates and relations of Shakspeare's plays, he always shows a keen appreciation of the value of external evidence, and likewise of the metrical evidence, the markt changes of metre in Shakspeare's verse as he advanct in life. As getting the right succession of Shakspeare's plays is 'a condition precedent' to following the growth of his mind, and as 'metrical tests' are a great help to this end, though they have had, till lately, little attention given to them in England,² I wish to say a few words on them.

Admitting (as I contend we must admit) that *Love's Labours Lost* is Shakspeare's earliest wholly-genuine play, and contrasting it with his latest, *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, and *Winter's Tale*, we find that—(I.), while in *Love's Labours Lost* the 5-measure ryming lines are 1,028, and the blank verse only 579; in *The Tempest* such ryming lines are 2, and the blank verse 1,458, while in the *Winter's Tale* there are no 5-measure ryming lines to 1,825 blank verse ones. Again, (II.) Shakspeare's early blank verse was written on the model of ryming verse, nearly every line had a pause at the end; but as he wrote on, he struggld out of these fetters into a freer and more natural line, which

When Hotspur of course means ten or twelve minutes, or perhaps even five. Certainly poor evidence that Hotspur is patient when in repose, pliable and yielding like a lamb! 2. Gervinus (p. 310) misses the humour of Hotspur's speech to Kate his wife (II. iii. *Folio*, p. 55, col. 2):

Hot. Come, wilt thou see me ride?

And when I am a horsebacke, I will sweare
I loue thee infinitely,

though he is right in saying Hotspur does love his wife, and that because he banter her. 3. He turns Desdemona's words into Othello's own (p. 517), 'She gave him a "world of sighs;" and she swore (even in remembrance *the Moor deemed it strange and wondrous pitiful*) that she wished she had not heard his story.' Whereas Shakspeare says, I. iii. 159–162, *Folio*, p. 314, col. 1:

She gaue me for my paines a world of [sighs]:

She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,

'Twas pittifull, 'twas wondrous pittifull:

She wish'd she had not heard it. . . .

Professor Dowden (who refers to the notice of Gervinus in vol. vi. of the *Shakspeare Jahrbuch*) thinks that Gervinus often goes much astray, as in what he says of Mercutio; and that his strong historical tendency imports meanings into the plays which are not there, as when he calls Hamlet a cultur'd man in an age of rude force, whereas it's an age of Osric, Polonius, universities, &c. The inconsistency, such as it is, seems to me in the facts, and not in Gervinus.

¹ Mr. Halliwell complains of this word being stretcht to include 'psychological and philosophical.'

² Malone in 1778 pointed out the value of the Ryme-Test in settling the priority of one early play over another. He also noticed the unstopt or run-on line test, which the late Mr. Bathurst brought more markedly under the notice of modern folk by his little book (1857) on Shakspeare's differences of versification.

often ran-on into the next, took the pause from the end, and put it in or near the middle of the line. Contrast these three extracts:—

LOVES LABOURS LOST, II. i. 13-34.

(Folio, p. 126, revised.)

Prin. Good Lord *Boyet*, my beauty,
though but mean,
Needs not the painted flourish of your
praise.
Beauty is bought by iudgement of the
eye,
Not vttered by base sale of chapmens
tongues.
I am lesse proud to heare you tell my
worth,
Then you much willing to be counted
wise,
In spending your wit in the praise of
mine.
But now to taske the tasker: good
Boyet,
You are not ignorant, all-telling fame
Doth noyse abroad, *Nauar* hath made a
vow,
Till painefull studie shall outweare three
yeares,
No woman may approach his silent
Court:
Therefore, to's seemeth it a needfull
course,
Before we enter his forbidden gates,
To know his pleasure, and, in that
belaffe,
Bold of your worthinesse, we single you,
As our best mouing faire soliciter.
Tell him, the daughter of the King of
France,
On serious businesse crauing quicke
dispatch,
Importunea personall conference with
his grace.
Haste; signifie so much; while we at-
tend,
Like humble visag'd suters, his high will.

LEAR, IV. iii. 17-25.

(From the *Quarto* of 1608, sig. L 7, ed.
Steevens; *Dyce*, vii. 318, revised.)

Kent. O then it mou'd her,
Gent. Not to a rage: patience and sor-
row stroue
Who should expresse her goodliest. You
have seene
Sun-shine and raine at once: her smiles
and teares
Were like a better day: those happy
smilets
That plaid on her ripe lip, seem'd not
to know
What guests were in her eyes; which
parted thence
As pearles from diamonds dropt. In
briebe, sorrow
Would be a rarity most belou'd, if all
Could so become it.

THE WINTERS TALE, III. ii. 232-243.

(Folio, p. 288, col. 1.)

Leo. Thou didst speake but well
When most the truth: which I receyue
much bet|ter
Then to be pittied of thee. Prethee,
bring me 234
To the dead bodies of my Queene, and
Sonne;
One graue shall be for both. Vpon
them shall [237
The causes of their death appeare (vnto
Our shame perpetuall). Once a day Ile
vis|it
The Chappell where they lye; and teares
shed there
Shall be my recrea|tion. So long as
Na|ture 240
Will beare vp with this exercise, so long
I dayly vow to vse it. Come and leade
| me 242
To these sorrowes.

The dullest ear cannot fail to recognize the difference between the early *Love's Labours Lost* pause or dwelling on the end of each line, and the later *Lear's* and *Winter's Tale* disregard of it, with (III.) the following shift of the pause to or near the middle of the next line. In short, the proportion of run-on lines to end-pause ones in three of the earliest and three of the latest plays of Shakspeare is as follows:—

Earliest Plays	Proportion of unstopt lines to end-stopt ones	Latest Plays	Proportion of unstopt lines to end-stopt ones
Love's Labour's Lost . . .	1 in 18·14	The Tempest	1 in 3·02
The Comedy of Errors . . .	1 in 10·7	Cymbeline King of Bri- taine	1 in 2·52
The Two Gentlemen of Verona	1 in 10	The Winter's Tale . . .	1 in 2·12

Again, note that all the above *Love's Labours Lost* lines have only five measures, or ten syllables, each; and not one weak ending, that is, a final unemphatic word, or a word that clearly belongs to the next line, while in *The Winter's Tale* extract there are four lines with extra syllables (240 having one also before the central pause) and three with weak endings, 234, 237, 242. In these points contrast the *Love's Labours Lost* lines also with the two following passages, from *The Winter's Tale*, (Act II., sc. i., l. 158–170; Folio, p. 283), and Shakspeare's part of *Henry VIII.* :—

<i>Lord.</i>	I had rather you did lacke then I (my Lord) Vpon this ground : and more it would content me To haue her Honor true, then your suspit ion, Be blam'd for't how you might.	159
<i>Leo.</i>	Why, what neede we Commune with you of this? but rather fol low Our forcefull instigation? Our prerog ative Cals not your Counsailes, but our naturall good nesse Imparts this: which, if you, or stupified, Or seeming so, in skill, cannot or will not Relish a truth, like vs, informe your selues ; We uede no more of your aduice : the mat ter, The losse, the gaine, the ord'ring on't, is all Properly ours.	161

(*Winter's Tale*, II. i. 158–170.)

Here (IV.) are seven lines with extra syllables,¹ and (V.) two lines, 159, 161, with 'weak-endings,' the coming of which in any number is a sure sign of Shakspeare's late work (see the Postscript). Again, take, for the weak ending, *Henry VIII.*, Act III., sc. ii., l. 97–104; Folio, p. 220, col. 2 :—

¹ Professor Hertzberg's table of the proportion of 11-syllable lines to all the others (12-syllable and short lines too) in the following 17 plays is given in the Introduction to his German translation of *Cymbeline*, as follows :—

	Per cent.		Per cent.
Love's Labour's Lost . . .	4	As You Like It	18
Titus Andronicus	5	Troilus and Cressida . . .	20
King John	6	All's Well	21
Richard II.	11·39	Othello	26
Errors	2	Winter's Tale	31·09
Merchant of Venice	15	Cymbeline	32
Two Gentlemen	15	Tempest	33
Shrew	11	Henry VIII.	44
Richard III.	18		

What though I know her ver tuous	
And well deserv'ing? Yet, I know her for	98
A spleeny Lutheran, and not wholesome to	99
Our cause, that she should lye i' th' bosome of	100
Our hard-ru'd King. A guine, there is sprung up	
An Heretique, an Arch-one; <i>Cranmer</i> , one	
Hath crawl'd into the fauour of the King,	
And is his Oracle.	

Three weak endings in three consecutive lines, 98–100; only one end-stopt line in 7; one with an extra syllable. These are notes of Shakspeare's latest plays; indeed, his share in *Henry VIII.* was almost certainly his last work. Or take Mr. Spedding's beautiful instance from *Cymbeline*, Act iv., sc. ii., l. 220–4; Folio, p. 389, col. 1:—

Thou shalt not lacke	
The Flower that's like thy face, Pale Primrose, nor	221
The azur'd Hare-bell, like thy Veines: no, nor	222
The leafe of Eglantine, whom not to slan der	
Out-sweetned not thy breath.	

'I doubt whether you will find a single case in any of Shakspeare's undoubtedly early plays of a line of the same structure. Where you find a line of ten syllables ending with a word of one syllable—that word not admitting either of emphasis or pause, but belonging to the next line, and forming part of its first word-group—you have a metrical effect of which Shakespeare grew fonder as he grew older; frequent in his latest period; up to the end of his middle period, so far as I can remember, unknown.' (Mr. Spedding's letter to me on his 'Pause-Test.' 'New Shakspeare Soc.'s Trans., 1874, p. 31.) Professor W. A. Hertzberg counts seventy-two weak endings in the 2,407 (omitting the songs and other lyrical pieces) of *Cymbeline*, or 1 to 33·43, showing its very late date, 1611 (?) There are other metrical tests, of which (VI.) the abandonment of doggerel—used only in five plays, all early or earlyish—and (VII.) the use of 6-measure lines, are two. No one test can be trusted; all must be combin'd and consider'd, and us'd as helps for the higher æsthetic criticism. Every student should work at these tests for himself.¹ As material that may help him in using the

¹ Don't turn your Shakspeare into a mere arithmetic-book, and fancy you're a great critic because you add up a lot of rymes or end-stopt lines, and do a great many sums out of your poet. This is mere clerk's work; but it is needed to impress the facts of Shakspeare's changes in metre on your mind, and to help others, as well as yourself, to data for settling the succession of the plays. Metrical tests are but one branch of the tree of criticism. Mr. Hales's seven tests for the growth of Shakspeare's art and mind in his plays are: 1. External Evidence (entries in the Stationers' Registers, Diaries, &c.) 2. Historical Allusions in the Plays. 3. Changes of Metre. 4. Change of Language and Style; then, Development of Dramatic Art, as shown in 5. Power of Characterization, and 6. Dramatic Unity. 7. (the most important of all) Knowledge of Life (not only knowledge of its facts, but a growth of moral insight, and of belief in moral laws ruling men, and the course of world). See my report of his two Lectures on Shakspeare in *The Academy*, Jan. 17, 1874, p. 63; Jan. 31, p. 117.

ryme-test, I reprint from the 'New Sh. Soc.'s Trans.,' 1874, p. 16, Mr. Fleay's 'Metrical Table of Shakespeare's Plays,' though the order of the plays is not rightly given in it—has been since largely altered by its compiler—and though it has not been verifi'd by any other counter:—

METRICAL TABLE OF SHAKSPERE'S PLAYS.

PLAY.	TOTAL OF LINES.	PROSE.	BLANK.	RYMES, 5 MEASURES.	RYMES, SHORT LINES.	SONGS.	DOUBLE ENDINGS.	ALTERNATES.	SONNETS.	DOUGEREL.	1 MEASURE.	2 MEASURES.	3 MEASURES.	4 MEASURES.	6 MEASURES.
I. PLAYS OF FIRST (RHYMING) PERIOD.															
Love's L. Lost.	2789	1086	579	1028	54	32	9	236	71	194	4	12	13	—	1
Midsun. N. D.	2251	441	878	731	138	63	29	158	—	—	—	5	3	—	—
Com. of Errors.	1770	240	1150	390	—	—	137	64	—	109	3	8	9	—	—
Rom. and Jul.	3002	405	2111	486	—	—	118	62	28	—	10	20	16	4?	6
Richard II.	2644	—	2107	537	—	—	148	12	—	—	11	17	26	22	33?
II. HISTORIES OF SECOND PERIOD.															
Richard III.	3599	55?	3374	170	—	—	570	—	—	—	20	39	18	23	16
King John.	2553	—	2403	150	—	—	54	12	—	—	1	9	4	4	2
1 Henry IV.	3170	1464	1622	84	—	—	60	4	—	—	16	17	16	16	13
2 Henry IV.	3437	1860	1417	74	7	15	203	[Pistol 64 l.]	—	—	3	13	7	—	6
Henry V.	9320	1531	1678	101	2	8	291	[Pist. 157 l.]	14	—	2	13	10	4	23
III. COMEDIES OF SECOND PERIOD.															
T. Gent. of V.	2060	409	1510	116	—	15	203	16	—	18	8	15	32	8	5
Mer. of Ven.	2705	673	1896	93	34	9	297	4	—	4	8	16	22	2	14
Twelf. Night.	2684	1741	763	120	—	60	152	—	—	—	8	21	23	5	10
As you Like it.	2904	1681	925	71	130	97	211	10	—	2	3	10	33	1	5
Merry Wives.	3018	2703	227	69	—	19	32	[Pistol 39 l.]	—	—	—	3	3	—	8
Much Ado, &c.	2823	2106	643	40	18	16	129	22	—	—	2	7	15	4	4
IV. COMEDIES OF THIRD PERIOD.															
All's Well.	2981	1453	1234	280	2	12	223	8	14	—	7	31	31	5	14
Meas. for Me.	2809	1134	1574	73	22	6	338	—	—	—	10	29	66	5	47
V. TRAGEDIES OF THIRD PERIOD.															
Troilus and C.	3428	1186	2025	196	—	16	441	—	—	—	10	46	62	13	43
Macbeth.	1993	158	1588	118	129	—	399	—	—	—	8	28	43	8	18
Cymbeline.	3448	638	2555	107	—	32	726	[84 l. in vision]	—	—	8	15	31	18	42
Hamlet.	3924	1208	2490	81	—	60	503	[66 l. in play]	—	—	20	53	55	11	47
Othello.	3324	541	2672	86	—	25	646	—	—	—	19	66	71	18	78
King Lear.	3298	903	2238	74	—	83	567	—	—	—	18	34	116	22	50
VI. PLAYS OF FOURTH PERIOD.															
Julius Cæsar.	2440	165	2241	84	—	—	369	—	—	—	14	81	55	6	16
Coriolanus.	3392	829	2521	42	—	—	708	—	—	—	9	33	76	19	42
Antony and C.	3964	255	2761	42	—	6	613	—	—	—	14	38	84	31	61
Tempest.	2068	458	1458	2	—	96	476	[54 l. in masq.]	—	—	2	16	47	5	11
Winter's Tale.	2758	844	1825	0	—	57	639	[32 l. in chor.]	—	—	8	14	19	13	16
VII. PLAYS IN WHICH SHAKSPERE WAS NOT SOLE AUTHOR.															
Henry VIII.	2754	67?	2613	16	—	12	1195	[46 l. in Prol. & Epilogue]	—	—	2	19	13	3	32
Two Noble K.	2734	179	2468	54	—	33	1079	—	—	—	9	19	46	17	5
Pericles.	2386	418	1436	225	89	—	120	[222 l. Gower]	—	—	17	49	59	26	18
Timon of A.	2358	596	1560	184	18	—	257	—	—	—	15	28	54	30	37
VIII. FIRST SKETCHES IN EARLY QUARTOS.															
Rom. and Jul.	2066	261	1451	354	—	—	92	28	—	—	7	26	50	21	92
Hamlet.	2068	509	1462	54	43	—	209	[36 l. in play]	—	—	13	45	76	37	30
Henry V.	1672	898	774	30	—	—	104	—	—	—	1	25	36	31	15
Merry Wives.	1396	1207	148	40	58	[fairies]	19	—	—	—	—	1	—	5	4
IX. DOUBTFUL PLAYS.															
T. of Shrew.	2671	516	1971	169	15	—	260	—	—	49	4	18	22	28	5
Titus Andron.	2525	49	2938	144	—	—	154	—	—	—	4	8	9	9	13
1 Henry VI.	2698	—	2379	814	—	—	140	—	—	—	5	5	4	7	12
2 Henry VI.	3032	448	2562	122	—	—	255	—	—	—	8	25	15	21	12
3 Henry VI.	2904	—	2749	155	—	—	346	—	—	—	13	11	14	11	7
Contention.	1952	381	1571	44	—	—	54	—	—	—	—	14	16	32	44
True Tragedy.	2101	—	2035	66	—	—	148	—	—	—	14	21	20	33	24

That the ryme-test fails to place Shakspeare's Plays in their right order, I have shown on pages 32-5 of the 'New Sh. Soc.'s Trans.' 1874; but its value, in combination with other tests, is great. Prof. Ingram has tabulated the results of his search with the weak-ending test, so valuable for Shakspeare's late plays, and it will be given in my Post-script, p. xlix.

§ 3. Besides helping in settling the order of Shakspeare's plays, metrical tests give important aid in—1, suggesting, by their differing proportions in different acts, possibly different dates for portions of his genuine plays; and 2, different authors in doubtful plays, and drawing definite lines between spurious and genuine work; but these tests must never be allowed to override the higher criticism: that must be judge. To take point 2 first. In his undergraduate days at Cambridge (1829-33) Mr. Tennyson pointed out—to Mr. Hallam, among others, who unwisely pooh-poohd the notion—that Fletcher's hand was largely in *Henry VIII.* Later, his friend Mr. James Spedding (the learned and able editor of 'Bacon's Works,' &c.) published his working-out of Mr. Tennyson's hint, in an analysis of the play, in 'The Gentleman's Magazine' for August 1850. Mr. Spedding first showed,—by their having markedly the characteristics of Shakspeare's style, and the rest of the play not having these 'notes' of authorship, but having other 'notes' of Fletcher's hand,—that the scenes below marked Shakspeare were his, and those marked Fletcher his.¹ Mr. Spedding then applied the extra-syllable (or feminine-ending) test, and I (in 1873) the end-stopt-line test, with the following result:—

Act	Scene	Lines	Extra Syll.	Proportion.	Author	Unstopt line.
I.	1	225	63	1 to 3·5	Shakspeare	1 to 1·83
	2	215	74	" 2·9	"	" 1·86
	3&4	172	100	" 1·7	Fletcher	" 3·84
II.	1	164	97	" 1·6	"	" 2·96
	2	129	77	" 1·6	"	" 3·43
	3	107	41	" 2·6	Shakspeare	" 2·37
	4	230	72	" 3·1	"	" 2·13
III.	1	166	119	" 1·3	Fletcher	" 4·83
	*2	193	62	" 3·	Shakspeare	" 2·
	3	257	152	" 1·6	Fletcher	" 3·43
IV.	1	116	57	" 2·	"	" 3·
	2	80	51	" 1·5	"	} " 4·55
	3	93	51	" 1·8	"	
	1	176	68	" 2·5	Shakspeare	" 2·28
V.	2	217	115	" 1·8	Fletcher	" 4·77
	3	(almost all prose or rough verse)			"	" 5·01
	4	37	44	" 1·6	"	" 6·41

* To exit of the King. The rest of ii. is made iii.

In short, the proportion of Shakspeare's double endings,² was 1 to

¹ Mr. S. Hickson had arrived before, privately and independently, at the same result. See Prof. Ingram's confirmation on p. xlix. *u.* below.

² Called also extra syllables, or feminine endings. Very rarely in Shakspeare,

3, of Fletcher's 1 to 1·7; of Shakspeare's unstopt lines, 1 to 2·03, of Fletcher's 1 to 3·79, both tests making Shakspeare's part of the play his latest work. Mr. Spedding's division of the play between Shakspeare and Fletcher was confirm'd independently by the late Mr. S. Hickson, in 'Notes and Queries,' ii. 198, Aug. 24, 1850; and by Mr. Fleay in 'New Sh. Soc. Trans.,' 1874, Appendix, p. 23.* It may be lookt on as certain. Again, Mr. Tennyson us't in his undergraduate days to read the genuine parts of *Pericles* to his friends in college. He read them to me in London last December (1873). He pickt them out by his ear and his knowledge of Shakspeare's hand. Last April Mr. Fleay sent me, as genuine, the same parts of *Pericles*, got at mainly by working metrical tests. Sidney Walker, Gervinus (nearly), Delius and others, had before attain'd the same result. Shakspeare wrote the *Marina* story in Acts iii. iv. v., less the brothel scenes and the Gower choruses. These, Rowley wrote, says Mr. Fleay, while G. Wilkins wrote Acts i. and ii. and arrang'd the play. ('New Sh. Soc. Trans.,' 1874, p. 195, &c.) Further, the late Mr. Samuel Hickson, in the 'Westminster and Foreign Quarterly' for April 1847, and working after Mr. Spalding and other critics,¹ restord to Shakspeare his portion of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which was not publisht till 1634, as 'Written by the memorable worthies of the time: Mr. John Fletcher, and Mr. William Shakspeare, Gent.' Mr. Hickson workt on æsthetic grounds, and showd that Shakspeare design'd the under-plot as well as the main plot of the play, and wrote Acts I.; II. i.; III. i. ii.; IV. iii. (prose); V. all but scene ii. The rest Fletcher wrote, as is shown by its weakness when compar'd with Shakspeare's part, and its more frequent use of the extra final syllable. Mr. Hickson's division of the play has been confirm'd by the double-ending test and the end-stopt line test, which show that while in the 1,124 Shakspeare-lines in the play there are 321 with extra final syllables or double endings, that is, 1 in 3·5, and only 1 line of 4-measures, in the 1,398 Fletcher-lines there are 771 with double endings, or 1 in 1·8, nearly twice as many as in Shakspeare, and 14 lines of 4-measures. Also in Shakspeare's lines the proportion of unstopt lines to end-stopt ones is 1 in 2·41, while in Fletcher's it is 1 in 5·53. See 'Appendix to New Sh. Soc. Trans.,' 1874, where Mr. Spedding's and Mr. Hickson's Papers are reprinted.

Again, the spurious parts of *Timon of Athens* had been more or less completely pointed out by Charles Knight and others. By metrical tests, with some slight help on æsthetic grounds from me, Mr. Fleay has, as I believe, rightly separated the genuine part of the play

more frequently in Fletcher, the last syllable is dwelt on:—'Up with a course or two, and tack about, boys.' *Two Noble Kinsmen*, Fletcher, III., v. 10 (see also II., ii., 63, 68, 71, 73).

¹ Mr. Tennyson always held that Shakspeare wrote much of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. So did Coleridge, Charles Lamb, and De Quincey. See page 1, below.

from the spurious, except in one instance, and printed it in the 'New Sh. Soc.'s Trans.,' 1874, p. 153-194. Once more, Farmer nearly 100 years ago said that Shakspeare wrote only the Petruchio scenes in the *Taming of the Shrew*. Mr. Collier hesitatingly adopted this view. Mr. Grant White develope it, and I (and Mr. Fleay afterwards) turnd it into figures, making the following parts Shakspeare's, though in many places they are workt up by him from the old *Taming of a Shrew*:—Induction; Act II., sc. i., l. 168-326 (? touching 115-167); III. ii. 1-125, 151-240; IV. i. (and ii. Dyce); IV. iii. v. (IV. iv. vi. Dyce); V. ii., 1-180; in short, the parts of Katharine and Petruchio, and almost all Grumio, with the characters on the stage with them, and possible occasional touches elsewhere. ('New Sh. Soc. Trans.' 1874, 103-110.) The rest is by the alterer and adapter of the old *A Shrew*, probably Marlowe, as there are deliberate copies or plagiarisms of him in ten passages (G. White).

The Cambridge editors, Messrs. Clark and Wright, have lately open'd an attack, in their Clarendon-Press edition, on the genuineness of certain parts of *Macbeth*, and the attack has been inconsiderately develope by Mr. Fleay¹ in the 'New Sh. Soc.'s Trans.,' 1874. So far as the assault is on the Porter's speech, it seems to me a complete failure;² and the notion that a fourth-rate writer like Middleton could have written the grim and pregnant humour of that Porter's speech, I look on as a mere idle fancy. Mr. Hales thinks that the change to the trochaic metre in Hecate's speeches, and their inferior quality, point to a different hand, perhaps Middleton's;³ but that is all of the play that he or I (who still hesitate⁴) can yet surrender. The wonderful pace at which the play was plainly written—a feverish haste drives it on—will account for many weaknesses in detail. The (probably) after-inserted King's evil lines are manifestly Shakspeare's. Mr. Fleay's late attack on the

¹ See Mr. Hales's excellent Paper on 'The Porter in *Macbeth*' in *The New Sh. Soc. Trans.*, 1874. Also De Quincey on the Knocking, *Works*, xiii. 192-8; Furness's *Macbeth*, p. 437.

² P.S.—Mr. Fleay's attack on the Porter's speech is now withdrawn. His attempt to make spurious the last three acts of *The Two Gentlemen* has also been wisely withdrawn. His theories, when not confirming former results, should be lookt on with the utmost suspicion.

³ Middleton is selected, because in his *Witch* (p. 401-2 Furness's *Macbeth*) is a song 'Come away, come away,' which Davenant (who professt to be Shakspeare's son by an inn-keeper's wife) inserted in his version of Shakspeare's *Macbeth* (p. 337, Furness) at the point (III. v. 33) where Shakspeare or his editors put *Come away, come away*, in the Folio. Also at the Folio's '*Musicke and a Song. Blacke Spirits*,' IV. i. 43, Davenant inserts Middleton's song 'Black spirits and white, red spirits and gray' (p. 404, p. 339, Furness), with variations.

⁴ Compare with the stilted *Witch* speeches Lucianus's charm-lines in *Hamlet*, III. ii. 266-271. (Consider whether Hamlet's speech for the players of a dozen or sixteen lines (II. ii. 566, III. ii. 1, 86) is III. ii. 197-223, or is never deliverd, as his own excited utterance (III. ii. 272-5), and the King's remorseful rising (276) bring on the crisis which the speech was perhaps intended (III. ii. 86) to provoke. See Prof. Seeley and Mr. Malleson hereon, in *N. Sh. Soc. Trans.*, Pt. 2 or 3.

genuineness of parts of *Julius Cæsar* ('New Sh. Soc. Trans.,' 1874, Part 2.) is so groundless, weak and vague, as hardly to deserve mention.

Richard III. has yet to be dealt with. The continuous strain of the women's speeches, and the monotonous 5-measure end-stopt line, have been thought by some to point to a second hand in the play, probably Marlowe's. But Mr. Spedding is strongly opposed to this view.

In 1 *Henry VI.* every reader, will, I apprehend, see, like Gerwinus (p. 101), three hands, though all may not agree in the parts of the play they assign to those hands. Reading it independently, though hastily, before I knew other folks' notions about it, I could not recognize Shakspeare's hand till II. iv., the Temple-Garden scene¹ (as Hallam notes). Whether Shakspeare wrote more than II. iv., IV. ii.;² perhaps IV. i. iv. 12-46; possibly IV. v., I have not had time to work out: but a new ryming man seems to me to begin in IV. vi. vii.; and the first hand seems to write V. ii. iv.,³ if not all V.

For the argument that Marlowe, Peele, and Greene, wrote *The Contention* and *True Tragedy*,—the foundations of the 2nd and 3rd Parts of *Henry VI.*,—Malone's essay should be consulted. (Variorum ed. of 1821, vol. xviii., p. 555.) On the other side, for the fallacious argument (from the unity of historical view, &c.) that Shakspeare wrote all the Three Parts of *Henry VI.*, as well as *The Contention* and *True Tragedy*, Charles Knight's essay in his 'Pictorial Shakspeare' (Histories, vol. ii., Library ed. vol. vii.) should be read. For the argument from style, that in lifting or altering 1,479 lines from *The Contention* for

¹ This scene has a very large proportion of extra-syllable lines; 30 in 134, or 1 in 4·46. It has 6 run-on lines, or 1 in 22·33. II. ii. 1-15 may have a touch of Shakspeare, but are probably Marlowe.

² Compars l. 28, *Folio*, p. 111, col. 2:—

'Ten thousand French *haue tane the Sacrament*
To ryue their dangerous Artilleris
Vpon no Christian soule but English Talbot.'

with *Ric. II.*, V. ii. 17, *Folio*, p. 42, col. 2:—

'A dozen of them heere *haue tane the Sacrament*. . . .
To kill the King at Oxford.'

³ Mr. Grant White ventures to express the opinion that the greater part of the First Part of *King Henry the Sixth* was originally written by Greene, whose style of thought and versification may be detected throughout the play, beneath the thin embellishment with which it was disguised by Shakspeare, and especially in the first and second Scenes of the first Act; that traces of Marlowe's furious pen may be discovered in the second and third scenes of Act II.; and I should be inclined to attribute the complets of the fifth, sixth, and seventh Scenes of Act IV. to Peele (for their pathos is quite like his in motive, and it must be remembered that Shakspeare has retouched them), were it not that Peele could hardly have written so many distichs without falling once into a peculiarity of rhymes which constantly occurs in his works, and which consists in making an accented syllable rhyme with one that is unaccented.' (Cp. *royal*, withál; *agó*, ráinbow; *way*, ída; *dený*, attórney, &c., in 'The Arraignment of Paris.')

Henry VI., Part 2; and 1,931 lines from *True Tragedy* for *Henry VI.*, Part 3, Shakspeare was but transferring (but with few exceptions) his own early work to his later recast of these plays, see Mr. R. Grant White's very able essay in his New York edition of Shakspeare, vol. vii., p. 403, &c.¹ Mr. Grant White's view has just been confirmed by Mr. Rives's Essay on *Henry VI.* (Bell, 2s.). But one can hardly believe that all the present 2 and 3 *Henry VI.* is Shakspeare's, however early one may suppose him to have written it. To 2 *Henry VI.* he added 1,551 fresh lines, to 3 *Henry VI.* 973 fresh lines. The lifted lines are distinguished by the absence of inverted commas in the text of Malone, and in the editions printed from his, of which G. Bell and Sons' small-type 3s. 6d. book in Bohn's series is one. The lines marked with 'a single inverted comma' were, as Malone thought, retouched and greatly improved by Shakspeare; while those marked by 'double inverted commas' were his own original production. It is a very great pity that later editors have not followed this most instructive arrangement. To its want, when reading the play, my own indecision about the authorship is due. The New Shakspeare Society will no doubt soon publish a parallel-text edition of 2 and 3 *Henry VI.*, and *The Contention* and *True Tragedy*.

Titus Andronicus one would only be too glad to turn out of Shakspeare's plays, so repulsive are its subject and the treatment of it. But the external evidence is too strong for us.² He no doubt retouched it; and Mr. H. B. Wheatley has collected in the 'New Sh. Soc.'s Trans.,' 1874, p. 126-9, the passages in which he thinks he sees Shakspeare's hand. See, too, Gervinus, p. 102-6, below.

Lastly, Mr. R. Simpson and myself feeling—as must often have been felt before—that Act II. of *King Edward III.* (Tanchnitz 'Five Doubtful Plays of William Shakespeare, 1869,' 1s. 10d.), the King's making love to the Countess of Salisbury, was either Shakspeare's, or worthy of him in his early manhood, asked Mr. Fleay to examine the

¹ Mr. R. Grant White's 'opinion is, that the First Part of *The Contention*, *The True Tragedy*, and probably an early form of the First Part of *King Henry the Sixth*, unknown to us, were written by Marlowe, Greene, and Shakespeare (and perhaps Peele) together . . . soon after the arrival of Shakespeare in London; and that he, in taking passages, and sometimes whole Scenes, from those plays for his *King Henry the Sixth* did little more than to reclaim his own' (vii. 407). 'We find, then, that . . . Shakespeare retained 2,299 lines of the old version in the new, that he wrote 2,524 lines especially for the new version, and that 1,111 lines of the new version are alterations or expansions of passages in the old. That is, more than three-fourths of the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry the Sixth* may be regarded—with slight allowance for unobliterated traces of his co-laborers—as Shakespeare's own in every sense of the word; and to the remainder he probably has as good a claim as to many passages which he found in prose in various authors, and which were transmuted into poetry in their passage through the magical alembic of his brain.'—R. Grant White, *Shakespeare's Works*, vii. 462.

² In the Preface to *Titus* in my big Folio edition you will find a new theory on this subject.—J. O. (Halliwell) Phillips.

play. He added to it the two pages from the entry of the King in Act I. sc. ii., and then said that in this King-Countess Episode the proportion of ryme-lines to verse-lines is 1 to 7; in the other parts of the play, 1 to 20; in the episode the proportion of lines with double endings (extra syllables or feminine endings) to regular 5-measure lines is 1 to 10; in the rest of the play it is 1 to 25. As the episode contains 'expressions like *hugg*, *vasture*, &c., which are either of frequent occurrence in Shakspeare, or have the true ring of his coinage in them'; as it introduces 'two new characters' (Derby and Audley) who 'are afterwards develop'd after a totally different fashion,' and a third, 'Lodowick, the King's poet-secretary,' who is confined to the episode only, he concluded that Shakspeare did write this episode ('Academy,' April 25, 1874, p. 462). The question of Shakspeare's having taken any part in the other 'doubtful plays' formerly assigned to him, needs further investigation.

We must now hark back to point 1 (p. xxvii.), the help that metrical tests give in suggesting or confirming different dates for different periods of a play. This is a question to be approached with very great caution, and one on which trust in one test may lead to ridiculous absurdities. We have as yet no comparative tables of the differences of metrical peculiarities in the different acts and scenes of Shakspeare's plays, nor do we know whether any working test could be got from them if we had. But we do know that Shakspeare retouched and enlarged certain plays, and we are bound to see whether we can recognize in them his later work. *Love's Labours Lost*, for instance, which we feel sure—from its excessive word-play, its prevalence of ryme and end-stopped lines, its large use of doggerel, its want of dramatic development (it is a play of conversation and situation), its faint characterisation, &c.—must have been written quite early, say before 1590, is stated by the Quarto of 1598 (the earliest known) to have been 'Newly corrected and augmented.'¹ So with *All's Well*—

¹ I believe that Berowne's last speech in Act III., at least his lines 305-8 in IV. iii., and possibly V. ii. 315-334 (though more in the earlier style) are later insertions. Dyce says on IV. iii. 299-304 (Globe), 312-319 (as compared with 320, &c.), 'Nothing can be plainer than that in this speech we have two passages, both in their original and in their altered shape, the compositor having confounded the new matter with the old.' Mr. Spedding wrote thus on Saturday, Feb. 2, 1839: 'Finished *Love's Labour's Lost*. Observe the inequality in the length of the Acts; the first being half as long again, the fourth twice as long, the fifth three times as long, as the second and third. This is a hint where to look for the principal additions and alterations. In the first Act I suspect Biron's remonstrance against the vow (to begin with) to be an insertion. In the fourth, nearly the whole of the close, from Biron's burst "Who sees the heavenly Rosaline" (IV. iii. 221). In the fifth, the whole of the first scene between Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel bears traces, to me, of the maturer hand, and may have been inserted bodily. The whole close of the fifth Act, from the entrance of Merade (V. ii. 723), has been probably rewritten, and may bear the same relation to the original

possibly,¹ the recast of *Loues Labours Wonne* (Meres),—*The Merchant of Venice* (in which I agree with Mr. Hales that the casket scenes at least are earlier work), perhaps *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and other plays. And we are bound to search and see whether we can detect any of these augmentations—if not corrections—by their fuller thought and riper style. Study of the parallel-text Quartos will largely help in this.

In the case of *Troilus and Cressida*, as Mr. Alexander J. Ellis (our great authority on Early English and Shakspearean Pronunciation and Metre) said to me, there are clearly three stories: 1. Of Troilus and Cressida. 2. Of Hector. 3. Of Ajax, Ulysses, and the Greek Camp²—of which he car'd only to read the third, so far was it above the other two. The point must have been noticed often before. To the parts of the play dealing with these three stories, Mr. Fleay has applied the rhyme-test, with the following result ('New Sh. Soc. Trans.,' 1874, p. 2), pointing to three different dates for the different parts of the play. That there are two, an early, and a late, I do not doubt; the three dates I do doubt:—

Troilus story	Hector story	Ajax story	Rhyme lines
72	50	16	Verse lines
607	798	873	ratio
1 : 8·4	1 : 13·6	1 : 54·5	

Discussions of the Parliament Scene in *Richard II.*, *All's Well*, *The*

copy which Rosaline's speech "Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Biron," &c. (V. ii. 851-864) bears to the original speech of six lines (827-832), which has been allowed by mistake to stand. There are also a few lines (1-3) at the opening of the fourth Act which I have no doubt were introduced in the corrected copy.

Prince. Was that the king, that spur'd his horse so hard

Against the steep uprising of the hill?

Boyet. I know not; but I think it was not he.

It was thus that Shakspeare learnt to *shade off* his scenes, to carry the action beyond the stage. Thus, in *Romeo and Juliet*, I. ii., old Capulet and Paris enter talking:—

But Montague is bound as well as I
In penalty alike, &c.

which was introduced in the amended copy.'

¹ Professors Delius, Hertzberg (who has specially gone into the point), Ingram and Dowden hold that the style, verse, and plot all belong to one period. Craik's and Hertzberg's view that *Love's Labours Wonne* is *The Taming of the Shrew* cannot be supported in the face of the original *Taming of (A) Shrew*.

² The Troilus story is in I. i. 1-107, ii. 1-321; II. i. 160, ii. iii. 1-33; IV. i., ii., iii., iv. 1-141, v. 12-53; *IV. v. 277-293; *V. i. 89-93, ii., iii. 97-115, iv. 20-24, v. 1-5, vi. 1-11. (*In all the Act V. scenes, and in IV. v. 277-293, Ulysses or Diomed comes in; the stories overlap.) The Hector story is in I. i. 108-119, iii. 213-309; II. ii.; III. i. 161-172; IV. iv. 142-150, v. 1-11, 64-276; *V. i., iii. 1-97, v., &c. to the end (except sc. vii. viii. ix., and epilogue, probably spurious).—Fleay. Dyce says, 'That some portions of it, particularly towards the end, are from the pen of a very inferior dramatist, is unquestionable; and they belong . . . perhaps to the joint production of Dekker and Chettle,' mentioned in Henslowe's *Diary*, p. 147, &c., ed. Shakspeare Soc.

Two Gentlemen (very feeble, as I think), and *Twelfth Night*, are also contained in Mr. Fleay's paper.

§ 4. As Shakspeare's change of metre was but one of the signs of the growth of his art and power, the student must watch for all further manifestations of that growth in the poet's work; daring use of words, crowding new and fuller meanings into them, so as often to produce obscurity (specially in *Macbeth* and *Lear*¹); change from fancy to imagination in figures of speech; increase in power of making his characters live, so that they become real men and women to you; deepening of purpose; heightening of tone; broadening of view; the insight growing greater as the art became perfect. To this end, registers should be made of all peculiar phrases, happy uses of words, and striking metaphors in the plays, as successively read; the parallel-texts of the first and second Quartos of *Romeo and Juliet* (now in the press for the New Sh. Soc., edited by Mr. P. A. Daniel), of *Hamlet* (edited by Josiah Allen, with preface by Samuel Timmins; Sampson Low, 1860), and other plays, when published, should be compared. Shakspeare's treatment of the same thought or subject at different periods of his life should also be compared; take, for instance, the pretty impatience of Juliet to get news of Romeo out of her nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*; of Rosalind to get news of her lover, Orlando, out of Celia, in the later *As You Like It*; and of Imogen to get tidings of her husband, Posthumus, out of Pisanio, in the still later *Cymbeline*, III., ii. Again, the separation in storm and shipwreck of the family of Ægeon, and the re-union of father, child, and mother in the early *Comedy of Errors*, should be compared with the nearly-like re-union, if not separation, in the much later *Pericles*, &c. For incidents, take Mr. Spedding's happy instance of Shakspeare's treatment of the face of a beautiful woman just dead:

1. *Romeo and Juliet*, second edition (1599), not in the first edition, therefore presumably written between 1597 and 1599:—

Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff.
Life and these lips have long been separated.
Death lies on her, like an untimely frost
Upon the fairest flower of all the field.

2. 'Antony and Cleopatra' (1608, according to Delius, &c.):—

If they had swallow'd poison, 'twould appear
By external swelling; *but she looks like sleep,*
As she would catch another Anthony
In her strong toil of grace.

3. 'Cymbeline' (date disputed, but *I* say one of the latest [? 1611] plays):—

How found you him? [Imogen disguised as a youth.]
Stark, as you see,
Thus smiling, as some fly had tickled slumber,
Not as death's dart being laughed at. His right cheek
Reposing on a cushion.

¹ Mr. Hales, in *Academy*, Jan. 17, 1874, p. 63, col. 3.

'The difference in the treatment in these three cases represents the progress of a great change in manner and taste: a change which could not be put on or off like the fashion, but was part of the man' ('New Sh. Soc.'s Trans.,' 1874, p. 30). Beautiful as the tender pathos of the first image, Fancy-bred, is, we must yet feel that in the second and third the Imagination of the poet dwells no longer on the outside, but goes to the very heart of the matter. Cleopatra is shown in the deepest desire of her life; Imogen in her purity smiling unconsciously at death.¹

Of stage situations and business, Shakspeare started with a perfect mastery: his first two plays, *Love's Labours Lost* and *Errors*, prove

¹ Compare, in Mr. Ruskin's chapter "Of Imagination Penetrative," 'Modern Painters,' Vol. II., Part II., § 2, Chap. III., p. 158, ed. 1848, his instance of lips described by Fancy, dwelling on the outside, and Imagination going to the heart and inner nature of everything. The bride's lips red (Sir John Suckling); fair Rosamond's, struck by Eleanor (Warner); the lamp of life, 'as the radiant clouds of morning through thin clouds' (Shelley); and then the bare bones of Yorick's skull (*Hamlet* V. i. 207):—

'Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft! Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar?'

'There is the essence of life, and the full power of imagination.

'Again compare Milton's flowers in *Lycidas* with Perdita's (in the *Winter's Tale*). In Milton it happens, I think generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay:—

'Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies, (*Imagination*)
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine, (*Nugatory*)
The white pink and the pansy freak'd with jet, (*Fancy*)
The glowing violet, (*Imagination*)
The musk rose and the well-attir'd woodbine, (*Fancy, vulgar*)
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head, (*Imagination*)
And every flower that sad embroidery wears.' (*Mixed*)

'Then hear Perdita:—

'O, Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon: Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty. Violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath. Pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids.'

'Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of every flower, after having toucht them all at first with that heavenly timidity, the shadow of Proserpine's, and gilded them with celestial gathering; and never stops on their spots or bodily shapes; while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that, without this bit of paper-staining, would have been the most precious to us of all. 'There is pansies: that's for thoughts.' (Ophelia, in *Hamlet*.)

it, and his undoubtedly prior training as an actor,¹ render it probable; but in characterization his growth from *Loves Labours Lost* to *Henry IV.* was wonderfully rapid and sure. Much higher than that he could not grow, though he could spread his branches over all the earth. In knowledge of life he increast to the end;² in wisdom he ripend; leaving his works to us, a joy and possession for ever.

§ 5. These works I would have the student read in the following order, setting aside *Titus Andronicus* (quite early) and *Henry VI.* (recast before *Henry IV.*), till he is able to judge of them for himself.

Shakspeare began his career with Love—its vagaries and its sorrows,—Fun, and Light Comedy, *Venus and Adonis* (full of youthful passion, and notes of his Stratford country life³); *Love's Labour's Lost* (full of brilliant word-play and wit); *The Comedy of Errors* (a farce full of bustle and fun, yet with a pathetic background, p. 135); *Midsummer Night's Dream* (a wedding-play, joining fairyland to Stratford clowndom, first revealing a genius to which any height must be within reach); *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (showing, besides much comedy, the quick versatile Italian nature that so took Shakspeare, and the evils of self-abandonment to love, p. 152). Then, in more serious vein, he coupled Love with Pathos and Tragedy, and in the Southern passion and despair of *Romeo and Juliet* showd again a genius never equalld by any but himself. With this beautiful and pathetic play should be read Shakspeare's earlier *Lucrece*⁴ (in which he rivalld the tender pity of Chaucer's *Troilus*), and the king-and-countess episode in *Edward III.* (see p. xxxi. above), in which (if

¹ Though the earliest print of Shakspeare's name as an actor is 1594 (found by Mr. Halliwell), yet Mr. R. Simpson's quotations about 'feathers' in *The Academy*, April 4th, 1874, p. 368, col. 2, show that Greene, when calling Shakspeare an upstart crow 'beautified with our feathers' (G.'s posthumus *Groatesworth of Wit*, 1592) meant to speak of him as an actor, and evidently then a well-known one, as well as an author. In 1598 Shakspeare acted in Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour': see p. 72 of this comedy in Jonson's *Works*, 1616.

² Mr. Hales, in *Academy*, Jan. 17, 1874, p. 63, col. 3.

³ In the 'Venus' it is not only the well-known descriptions of the horse (l. 260–318), and the hare-hunt (l. 673–708), that show the Stratford man, but the touches of the overflowing Avon (72), the two silver doves (366), the milch doe and fawn in some brake in Charlecote Park (875–6), the red morn (453), of which the weatherwise say:—

A red sky at night 's a shepherd's delight;
A red sky at morning 's a shepherd's warning;

the hush of the wind before it rains (458), the many clouds consulting for foul weather (972), the night owl (531), the lark (853), &c. &c.; just as the artist (289) and the shrill-tongued tapsters (849) show the taste of London life.—F. J. F., in *The Academy*, Aug. 15, 1874, p. 179, col. 1.

⁴ It must have been written some time after the *Venus* as its proportion of unstopt lines is 1 in 10·81 (174 such lines to the poem's 1,855) against the *Venus's* 1 in 25·40 (47 run-on lines in 1,194). The tide through old London Bridge is in l. 1,667 of *Lucrece*.

it be his) his first pure noble English woman-and-wife appears.¹ This same Pathos and Tragedy he took with him when he began his first national and patriotic, or Historical Plays, with *Richard II.* without comedy, or prose, but with its noble Gaunt, and its weak and erring king meeting the death he deservd. The feeling heightend in *Richard III.* (a play in which everything is sacrific'd to one character,—all is on the strain throughout (possibly with some of Marlowe's 'furious line,'—and) which is in intensity² the precursor of *Macbeth*); it was continu'd through *King John* (a panorama of fine scenes almost unconnected, save by Faulconbridge, but picturing that passionate love and yearning of Constance for her boy, which no one who has lost a child can ever forget³); though lessend in his recast of *Henry VI.*,—

'I put this forward only as a question deserving the careful attention of students. Having read this episode three times, I cannot say positively that it is Shakspeare's. I think it worthy of him in his younger days (the play was acted before 1596); and I do not think that Mr. Neil's point (p. 90) makes against this, that if Shakspeare had been the author of *Edward III.* he would hardly have written thus of Lucrece:—

Arise, true English lady! whom our isle
May better boast of, than e'er Roman might
Of her, whose ransack'd treasury hath task'd
The vain endeavour of so many pens.

Tauchnitz ed. p. 30, at foot.

This is just what the author of a *Lucrece* should have said of his own and others' work. And, as Mr. Hales says, the two following passages look like the same man's work:—

Out with the moon-line! I will none of
it!

And let me have her liken'd to the sun!
Say, she hath thrice more splendour
than the sun,

That her perfection emulates the sun,
That she breeds sweets as plenteous as the
sun,

That she doth thaw cold winter like the
sun,

That she doth cheer fresh summer like
the sun,

And, in this application to the sun,
Bid her be free and general as the sun,
Who smiles upon the basest weed that
grows,

As lovingly as on the fragrant rose.

Edw. III. ii. 1, Tauchnitz ed., p. 16.

Bass.

Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the
ring,

If you did know for whom I gave the
ring,

And would conceive for what I gave the
ring,

And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the
ring,

You would abate the strength of your
displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of
the ring,

Or half her worthiness that gave the
ring,

Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with
the ring.

Merchant of Venice, v. i. 193–202:
Globe, p. 203, col. 1.

² I take Shylock to be Shakspeare's intensest male character, Timon and Lear the next. Constance (in *King John*) the most intense female character.

³ If the date of *King John* is 1596—which I doubt,—then those most touching speeches of Constance about her boy Arthur may be fairly link'd with Shakspeare's feelings on the death of his own only boy Hamnet, who was bur'd on August 11, 1596, at Stratford.

if that comes here—(Part II. with its noble Gloster and the rich humour of Cade; Part III. with its fierce Margaret, its Warwick and York). Shakspeare brightend again in *The Merchant of Venice* (with its Portia graceful, loving, witty, and wise, though the strain is still seen in Shylock); and then perhaps re-wrote the amusing Petruchio-Katharine-Grumio scenes in *The Taming of the Shrew*, with its most racy Induction (see p. xxix.). In his three comedies of Falstaff, or the First and Second Parts of *Henry IV.* and the *Merry Wives*,¹ he culminated in humour and comic power.² Never equalld has Falstaff been, and never will be, I believe. The drama of Shakspeare's hero, *Henry V.* (in 1599),³ then closd the connected series of his historical plays,⁴ with its splendid bursts of patriotism—possibly against

¹ The *Merry Wives* was a piece hastily written to please Queen Elizabeth: so says tradition; and rightly, I believe. No doubt it was revis'd; but for intrinsic merit it cannot stand for a moment by *Henry IV.*

² *Henry IV.*, or at least the First Part of it, must have been written in or about 1597, the proudest year of Shakspeare's early life, when, not quite thirty-three, he bought New Place, 'the great house' of Stratford.

³ In 1599 also, Shakspeare became a partner in some of the profits of the Globe. See the "Memorial of Cutbert Burbage, and Winifred his brother's wife, and William his sonne," in 1635, to the Lord Chamberlaine, discovered by Mr. J. O. Halliwell in 1870, made public by him in 1874, printed by me from the Record Office MS. in *The Academy*, March 7, and since issued privately by Mr. Halliwell. 'The father of us, Cutbert and Richard Burbage, was the first builder of playhowses, and was himselfe in his younger yeeres a player. "The theater" hee built with many hundred poundes taken up at interest. The players that lived in these first times had only the profits arising from the dores; but now the players receive all the commings in at the dores to themselves, and halfe the galleries from the houskeepers [the owners or lessees of the theatre]. Hee built this house upon leased ground, by which meanes the landlord and hee had a great suite in law, and, by his death, the like troubles fell on us his sonnes: wee then hethought us of altering from thence, and at like expence built the Globe [A.D. 1599: Mr. Halliwell says] with more summes of money taken up at interest, which lay heavy on us many yeares; and to ourselves wee joyned those deserving men, Shakspeare, Hemings, Condall, Philips, and others, partners in the profittes of that they call the House. . . .

'Thus. Right Honorable, as concerning the Globe, where wee ourselves are but lessees. Now for the Blackfriars: that is our inheritance; our father purchased it at extreame rates, and made it into a playhouse with great charge and trouble: which after was leased out to one Evans that first sett up the boyes commonly called the Queenes Majesties Children of the Chappell. In processe of time, the boyes growing up to bee men, which were Underwood, Field, Ostler, and were taken to strengthen the King's service; and the more to strengthen the service, the boyes dayly wearing out, it was considered that house would bee as fitt for ourselves, and see [we] purchased the lease remaining from Evans, with our money, and placed *men players, which were Hemings, Condall, Shakspeare,* &c. This could not have been till, or after the year 1603, when James succeeded Elizabeth, and there was a 'King's service.' Besides, the Warrant of King James making Shakspeare's company the King's Company, and which bears date May 17th, 1603, mentions only the Globe, as this Company's 'now usuall house.'

⁴ *Henry VIII.*, not part of the series, was added at the end of Shakspeare's life. See Mr. Richard Simpson's able Paper on the 'Politics of Shakspeare's Historical

the contemporary glorification of the great Henri Quatre of France—though they cannot save the play from its weakness as a drama, necessitated by a battle (Agincourt) standing for its plot. It was succeeded by a brilliant set of comedies, possibly for the newly-opened Globe theatre:—*Much Ado about Nothing* (glittering with stars of wit and richest humour:—what do not the names Benedick and Beatrice, Dogberry and Verges mean to a Shakspeare-reader's ear?); *As You Like It* with its moral, 'Sweet are the uses of adversity,' its freshness of greenwood life, wherein men 'fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world'; and yet with its melancholy Jaques, who will not be comforted or glad, a prelude to the sadder time so close at hand. *Twelfth Night* (with its pompous goose of a Malvolio, its sharp Maria, its Toby Belch and Andrew Aguecheek, its cross-purposes in love). *All's Well* (possibly the recast of *Love's Labours Wonne*, with its unpleasant plot of a willing wife hunting and catching her unwilling husband, but with its inimitable braggart Parolles).

Here Shakspeare's 'Sonnets' should be read, and the tender sensitive nature that produced them commund with. Over and over again must they be read, till at least their main outlines are clear. The key to them is No. CXLIV. on 'the man right fair,' who is the poet's 'better angel,' and 'the worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.' That Gervinus's interpretation of them (p. 461–463)—from Armitage Brown—is right, I have no doubt. The later 'Sonnets' are the best preparation for *Hamlet*.

Undoubtedly at this time a shadow of darkness fell upon Shakspeare. What causes brought it, we cannot certainly tell. Private reasons the 'Sonnets' show. He was deserted by his mistress—wrongly but madly lov'd by him, in spite of the struggles of his better nature—for his dearest friend; and this for a time sever'd their friendship, never to be restord again as it first was. Public reasons there were: his great patron and friend Southampton¹ was declar'd traitor and imprison'd in 1601; was threatend with death, and in almost

Plays' in *The New Shakspeare Soc.'s Trans.*, 1874 or –5. He argues 'that Shakspeare was of the Essex party, against Burghley and Cecil; that in *Henry VI.* and *Richard II.* he show'd Elizabeth misled by Leicester, and then by Burghley (she herself said she was Richard II.); that *John* was aim'd at the many callers for foreign intervention in her time, his wars were hers of 1585; *Henry IV.* show'd how she us'd and cast off helpers, and picturd the Northern Rebellion in her reign (1569); *Henry V.* told her how foreign war united a nation, and brought about religious toleration at home (this was Essex's policy); *Henry VIII.* brought out the end of the constantly falling state of the old nobility, (which Shakspeare, in common with so many Elizabethans, lamented,) and the consummation of the full power of the Crown, two threads running through English history and Shakspeare's Historical Plays. Shakspeare's changes of the Chronicles were not only for dramatic effect, but to show the lessons he wisht them to teach on the political circumstances of his time.'

¹ This is Mr. Hales's suggestion. In the dedication to *Lucrecc*, Shakspeare says to Southampton, 'The love I dedicate to your lordship is without end.'

daily danger of it till Elizabeth's own death in 1603 set him free through King James: the rebellion and execution of Essex, Southampton's friend and the cause of his ruin, to whom Shakspeare had two years before alluded with pride in his Prologue to *Henry V.*, Act v. l. 30. At any rate, the times were out of joint. Shakspeare was stirred to his inmost depths, and gave forth the grandest series of Tragedies that the world has ever seen: *Hamlet* (followed by the tragi-comedy *Measure for Measure*), *Julius Cæsar*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida* (see p. xxxiii.), *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon*; showing what subjects were then kin to his frame of mind; how he felt, and struggled with, the stern realities of life; how he dwelt on the weakness and baseness of men, their treachery as friends and subjects, their lawless lust and ungoverned jealousy as lovers, their serpent-like ingratitude as children, their fickleness and disgustfulness as the many-headed mob, fit only to be spit upon and cursed: over all he held the terrors of conscience and the avenging sword of fate.

But Shakspeare could not end thus. After the darkness came light; after the storm, calm; and in the closing series of his plays—three tragedies, two comedies, and one history—inspired, I believe, by his renewed family-life at Stratford¹—he speaks of reconciliation and peace. His Tragedies now, for the first time, end happily; his Comedies have a quite new fulness of meaning and love; his History (though partly by Fletcher's mouth) speaks an injured wife's forgiveness of deepest wrongs, and prophesies blessings. All the plays turn on broken family ties united, or their breach forgiven unavenged. With wife and daughters again around him, the faultful past was remembered only that the present union might be closer. In *Pericles* (see p. xxviii.) the bereaved king finds once more his lost daughter, whose supposed death had made him dumb; and then both are united to the wife-and-mother whose seeming corpse had been committed to the waves. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (see p. xxviii.), in which Shakspeare again went back to Chaucer, his early teacher (p. xxxvi.) and delight, the forsworn brother (Arcite) dies repentant, recommending his brother (Palamon) to Emelye, his first love. In *Cymbeline* the true wife Imogen—'the most perfect' Imogen—wrongly and hastily mistrusted, rises from desertion and seeming death, to forgive and clasp to her ever-loving heart the husband who had doubted her: no Desdemona end for her.²

¹ Unless Thomas Greene, the Town Clerk of Stratford, was living at New Place with his 'cosen Shakspeare' or his family, Shakspeare cannot well have retired thither till after September 1609, as Greene then said a G. Brown might stay longer in his house, "the rather because I perceyved I might stay another yere at New Place." By June 21, 1611, Thomas Greene is probably in his new house, as an order was made that the town is 'to repare the churchyard wall at Mr. Greene's dwelling place.'—Halliwell's *Hist. of New Place*.

² Note, too, how, in *Cymbeline*, Shakspeare contrasts the evils of court life with the simplicity and innocence of country life, life then around him, as I contend.

In *The Tempest*—wherein Shakspeare ‘treads on the confines of other worlds’—wherein his new type of Stratford maiden is idealizd into Miranda, ‘so delicately refin’d, all but ethereal, in her virgin innocence’ (Mrs. Jameson),—his lesson is still of the breaking of family ties—brother and brother—repented of and forgiven :—

The rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance: they, being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a froune further.—V. i. 27–30; *Fol.* p. 16, col 2.

If with this play he really meant to end his poetic life,¹ to break the staff of his enchantment, ‘bury it certain fathoms in the earth, and, deeper than did ever plummet sound,’ drown his book (v. i. 54–7,) he changd his mind, and in the *Winter's Tale* gave us again the noble wife, Hermione, calm in her dignity, saintlike in her patience, forgiving her basely jealous and vindictive husband, while he united them again—as in *Pericles*—with their lost daughter Perdita, sweet with the fragrance of her Stratford flowers of spring, artless and beautiful, tender and noble-naturd, as Shakspeare alone could make her.

In *Henry VIII.* he returns again to the deserted wife. Katharine the divorced, pious, affectionate, simple, magnanimous,—in one sense, ‘the triumph of Shakspeare’s genius and his wisdom’ (Mrs. Jameson, pp. 379, 384)—forgives her ruffian husband ‘all, and prays God to do so likewise’ :—

tell him, in death I blest him,
For so I will. Mine eyes grow dimme: Farewell.
Fol. p. 226.

¹ Prof. Karl Elze’s attempt, in 1872, to prove that the *Tempest* was written in 1604, seems to me a failure. It may be thus stated : Because Ben Jonson in 1614 (Introduction to *Bartholomew Fair*) plainly sneerd at Shakspeare’s *Tempest* and *Winter's Tale* [which must therefore, surely, have been two of his latest plays, and freshest in the audience’s mind], therefore his allusion in *Volpone* 1607 (acted 1605), when speaking of Guarini—

‘All our English writers,
I mean such as are happy in the Italian,
Will deign to steal out of this author, mainly,
Almost as much as from Montagnié . . .’

was a cut at Shakspeare’s borrowing from Montaigne in *The Tempest*, II. i. 147, &c.,—although he never borrowd from Guarini;—and therefore *The Tempest* was written in 1604. That the poorer original of Shakspeare’s ‘gorgeous palaces’ vanishing, is in the Earl of Sterline’s *Darius* (1603); that Lord Southampton joind in fitting out a ship to sail to Virginia in 1605 (so that Caliban can be turnd into a native American, and Prospero into Lord Southampton!), and that a pamphlet in 1604 describd ‘a monstrous Fish that appeard in the form of a Woman from her waist upwards,’ cannot strengthen the knees of Prof. Elze’s weak hypothesis, is but too plain. All the metrical and æsthetic evidence is in favour of the late date of the *Tempest* (? 1610) which Jonson’s allusion in *Bartholomew Fair* confirms. Prof. Elze’s date of 1603 for *Henry VIII.* must also be given up.

And thus, forgiven and forgiving,¹ full of the highest wisdom and of peace, at one with family, and friends, and foes, in harmony with Avon's flow and Stratford's level meads, Shakspeare closd his life on earth.²

¹ It is certain, I think, that in his latest plays, of the Fourth Period, Shakspeare was also teaching himself the lesson of forgiveness for the wrongs and disappointments he had suffered, and which were reflected in the Tragedies of his Third Period. See on this my friend Prof. Dowden's forthcoming 'Mind and Art of Shakspeare' (H. S. King & Co.), with its fine and right likening of Shakspeare to a ship, beaten and storm-tost, but yet entering harbour with sails full-set, to anchor in peace. I quote it from the MS. of his Lectures:—

'There are lovers of Shakspeare so jealous of his honour that they are unable to suppose that any grave moral flaw could have impaired the perfection of his life and manhood. To me Shakspeare appears to have been a man who, by strenuous effort and with the aid of the good powers of the world, saved himself,—so as by fire. Before Shakspeare zealots demand our attention to ingenious theories to establish the immaculateness of Shakspeare's life, let them show that his writings never offend. When they have shown that Shakspeare's poetry possesses the proud virginity of Milton's poetry, they may then go on to show that Shakspeare's youth was devoted to an ideal of moral purity and elevation like the youth of Milton. I certainly should not infer from Shakspeare's writings that he held himself with virginal strength and pride remote from the blameful pleasures of the world. What I do *not* find anywhere in the plays of Shakspeare is a single cold-blooded, hard or selfish line—all is warm, sensitive, vital, radiant with delight, or a-thrill with pain. And what I dare to affirm of Shakspeare's life is, that whatever its sine may have been, they were not hard, selfish, deliberate, cold-blooded sins. The errors of his heart originated in his sensitiveness, in his imagination (not at first strictly trained to fidelity to the fact), in his quick sense of existence, and in the self-abandoning devotion of his heart. There are some noble lines by Chapman in which he pictures to himself the life of great energy, enthusiasms and passions, which for ever stands upon the edge of utmost danger, and yet for ever remains in absolute security:—

Give me a spirit that on life's rough sea
Loves to have his sails filled with a lusty wind
Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
And his rapt ship runs on her side so low
That she drinks water, and her keel ploughs air;
There is no danger to the man that knows
What life and death is; there's not any law
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
That he should stoop to any other law.

Such a master-spirit pressing forward under strained canvas was Shakspeare. If the ship dipped and drank water, she rose again; and at length we see her within view of her haven, sailing under a large, calm wind, not without tokens of stress of weather, but if battered, yet unbroken, by the waves. It is to dull lethargic lives that a moral accident is fatal, because they are tending no whither, and lack energy and momentum to right themselves again. To say anything against decent lethargic vices and timid virtues, anything to the advantage of the strenuous life of bold action and eager emotion which necessarily incurs risks and sometimes suffers, is, I am aware, "dangerous." Well, then, be it so; it is dangerous.'

² In his *History of New Place*, Mr. Halliwell has suggested a more probable cause for Shakspeare's death than the no doubt groundless traditional one (after 1662) of the drinking bout with Drayton and Ben Jonson, namely, that the

Now all that I have written on the succession of Shakspeare's works in relation to the man Shakspeare is liable to the objector's 'Pooh! all stuff! Shakspeare wrote comedies and tragedies for his company just as the Burbages told him to. His comedies were produc'd for some leading comic actor, and his tragedies for his friend and partner Richard Burbage, the great tragedian. Neither reflected his own feelings, except professionally, any more than Macbeth's or Othello's did Burbage's when he acted them.' Take it so, if you will; but still, I say, Do follow the course of Shakspeare's mind; still do commune with the creations of his brain as they flow'd from it; still note his wondrous growth in that sensibility and intensity, far beyond all other men's, that enabl'd him to throw himself into all the varid figures of his plays with ever-increasing power and skill; still watch his greatening of wisdom and knowledge of life, his dazzling wit and ever-flowing humour; still gaze at, and glory in, his dream of, nay, his breathing and living Fair Women, who enchant even Taine, and win the reverence of Gervinus and all true-sould men—beside whom Dante's Beatrice alone is fit to stand:—and then ask yourself whether the choice of Shakspeare's series of subjects was fixt by others' orders, or chance, or by his own frame of mind, his own mood; whether his young plays of love and fun, of patriotism and war,¹ of humour and wit, show'd his own early manhood or not, his time of successful struggle, and happy enjoyment of its fruits; whether the dark questionings of 'Hamlet,' the mingling with lawlessness, treachery, hatred, revenge, had nothing to do with his own later inner life; whether the reconciliation and peace of his latest plays were independent of his new quiet home-life at Stratford with its peace. I am content to abide by your answer. Depend on it that what our greatest Victorian poetess, Mrs. Barrett Browning, though a lyrist, said of her own poetry, is true, to a great extent, of Shakspeare in his dramas, 'They have my heart and life in them; they are not empty shells.' The feelings were in his soul; he put them into words; and that is why the world is at his feet.

pigsties and nuisances which the Corporation books show to have existed in Chapel Lane, which ran the whole length of New Place, bred the fever of which Shakspeare is said to have died.

Mr. Halliwell gives several extracts from the books, as '1605: the Chamberlaines shall gyve warning to Henry Smyth to plucke downe his pigges cote which is built nere the chapple wall, and the house of office (= privy) there.'—*New Place*, p. 29.

¹ They had, and naturally, their leaven of pathos and tragedy, as I have shown above.

TRIAL TABLE OF THE ORDER OF SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS.

[This, like all other tables, must be lookt on as merely tentative, and open to modification for any good reasons. But if only it comes near the truth, then reading the plays in its order will the sooner enable the student to find out its mistakes. (M. stands for 'mentioned by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598.') In his introductory Essays to *Shakspeare's Dramatische Werke* (German Shakspeare Society) Prof. Hertzberg dates *Titus* 1587-9, *Love's Labours Lost* 1592, *Comedy of Errors* about New Year's Day 1591, *Two Gentlemen* 1592, *All's Well* 1603, *Troilus and Cressida* 1603, and *Cymbeline* 1611. Mr. Grant White dates *Richard II.* 1595, *Richard III.* 1593-4.]

	Supposed Date	Earliest Allusion	Date of Publication
FIRST PERIOD.			
Venus and Adonis	1585-7		1593*
Titus Andronicus toucht up	(?) 1588	1594 M	[(?) 1594] 1600
Love's Labours Lost	1588-9	1598 M	1598 (amended)
[Love's Labours Wonno]		1598 M	
Comedy of Errors	1589-91	1594 M	1623
Midsummer Night's Dream (? 2 dates)	1590-1	1598 M	1600
Two Gentlemen of Verona	1590-2	1598 M	1623
(?) 1 Henry VI. toucht-up	(?) 1590-2		1623
(?) Troilus and Cressida, begun			
(?) Lucrece		1594	1594
Romeo and Juliet	(?) 1591-3	1595 M	1597
(?) A Lover's Complaint			
Richard II.	(?) 1593-4	? 1595 M	1597
Richard III.	1594	? 1595 M	1597
2 & 3 Henry VI. recast	(?) 1594-5		1623
John	1595	1598 M	1623
SECOND PERIOD.			
Merchant of Venice	(?) 1596	1598 M	1600†
Taming of the Shrew, part	(?) 1596-7		1623* ¹
1 Henry IV.	1596-7†	1598 M	1598
2 Henry IV.	1597-8†	1598 M	1600
Merry Wives	1598-9	1602	1602
Henry V.	1599‡	1599	1600
Much Ado	1599-1600‡	1600	1600
As you Like it	1600‡	1600	1623§
Twelfth Night	1601‡	1602	1623
All's Well (? L's. L. Wonne recast)	1601-2		1623
Sonnets	(?) 1592-1602	1598 M	1609
THIRD PERIOD.			
Hamlet	1602-3‡	(?)	1603*
Measure for Measure	(?) 1603		1623
Julius Caesar	(?) 1601-3	(?)	1623
Othello	(?) 1604	1610	1622

* Entered 1 year before at Stationers' Hall.

† Entered 2 years before at Stationers' Hall.

‡ May be lookt-on as fairly certain.

§ Entered in the Stationers' Registers in 1600.

¹ 'The Taming of a Shrew' was publisht in 1604.

Trial Table of the Order of Shakspeare's Plays—continu'd.

	Supposd Date	Earliest Allusion	Date of Publication
Macbeth	1605-6†	1610	1623
Lear	1605-6†	1606	1608*
Troilus and Cressida (?) completed .	1606-7	1609	1609
Antony and Cleopatra	1606-7	1608 (?)	1623
Coriolanus	(?) 1607-8		1623
Timon, part	1607-8		1623
FOURTH PERIOD.			
Pericles, part	1608†	1608	1609*
Two Noble Kinsmen, part	1609-12		1634
Tempest	(?) 1610	? 1614	1623
Cymbelino	1610-12		1623
Winter's Tale,	(?) 1611	1611	1623
Henry VIII., part	1613†	1613 (?)	1623

* Enter'd 1 year before at Stationers' Hall.

† May be lookt-on as fairly certain.

§ 6. Now of a few helps to reading Shakspeare. 1. As to Text: have the 'Globe' edition (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.) because its lines are number'd, and for sound text; but do not ruin your eyes by reading it. For reading, get a small 8vo. clear-type edition like Singer's, with notes—a cheap re-issue, in half-crown volumes, is just coming out (G. Bell and Sons). Get (if you can afford it) Mr. Furness's admirable Variorum edition of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* (15s. each, A. R. Smith); *Hamlet* is preparing; (the other plays will slowly follow); and, for their notes, Messrs. Clark and Wright's little Clarendon-Press edition of plays at 2s. or 2s. 6d. each (their 8vo. Cambridge edition with most valuable full collations, is out of print); and Craik's *Julius Cæsar*. 2. Glossaries, &c.: Mrs. Cowden's Clarke's 'Concordance' to the Plays (25s.), and Mrs. H. H. Furness's to the Minor Poems (15s.); Dr. Schmidt's most useful 'Shakespeare-Lexicon' (vol. i., A to L, 13s. 6d. Williams and Norgate), which well arranges the passages under their senses, and the parts of speech of the head-word; Dyce's 'Glossary' (last vol. of his Shakspeare), and Nares's 'Glossary' (2 vols., 24s., A. R. Smith). 3. Grammar and Metre: Dr. Abbott's 'Shakespearian Grammar' (Macmillan, 6s.) indispensable; but with some misscansions that will 'absolutely sear' you, as Mr. Ellis says, and over some of which you will groan, as we did in concert at the Philological Society when Professor Mayor read them (see his Paper in 'Phil. Soc. Trans.,' 1874, now in the press. Dr. Abbott, I need not say, ridicules our scannings). W. Sidney Walker's three volumes of Shakspeare Text-criticism (15s., A. R. Smith) are excellent.¹ C. Bathurst's capital little half-crown volume

¹ Dr. Ingleby describes his just publisht *Still Lion* as 'indications of a

on the end-stopt and unstopt line,—‘Changes in Shakespeare’s Versification at different Periods of his Life’ (J. W. Parker and Son)—is unluckily out of print. 4. Pronunciation: Mr. A. J. Ellis’s ‘Early English Pronunciation with Special Reference to Chaucer and Shakespeare’ (three Parts, 30s., Asher and Co.; or Part iii. only, the Shakespeare Part [p. 917–96], 10s. 5. Commentaries: First, Gervinus’s ‘Commentaries’ (12s., Smith and Elder)¹; second, Mrs. Jameson’s ‘Characteristics of Women,’ that is, Shakspeare’s Women—an enthusiastic and beautiful book (5s., Routledge); third, S. T. Coleridge’s ‘Shakespeare Lectures,’ &c., from vol. ii. of his ‘Biographia Literaria’ (3s. 6d.: Howell, Liverpool). Then, if you wish for more books, Hudson’s ‘Shakespeare, his Life, Art, and Characters’ (of his twenty-five greatest plays) (2 vols., 12s., Ginn, Boston, U.S.; Sampson Low, &c.); T. P. Courtenay’s matter-of-fact ‘Commentaries on the Historical Plays’ (2 vols., Colburn, 1840); Prof. Dowden’s forthcoming, ‘Mind and Art of Shakspeare’ (H. S. King and Co.); Schlegel’s ‘Dramatic Art’ (3s. 6d.), and Hazlitt’s thin ‘Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays’ (2s., G. Bell and Sons); Mr. John R. Wise’s charming little book on ‘Shakespeare: his Birthplace and its Neighbourhood’ (3s. 6d., Smith and Elder); Mr. Roach Smith’s ‘Rural Life of Shakespeare’ (? 2s. 6d., George Bell and Sons). And certainly buy a copy of Booth’s admirable Reprint of the First Folio of 1623 (12s. 6d., Glaisher, 265, High Holborn; with the Quarto of ‘Much Adoe,’ for 1s.) For the facts of Shakspeare’s Life, chronologically arrangd, Mr. S. Neil’s cheap little ‘Shakespeare: a Critical Biography’ (Houlston and Wright) is the best book. On the ‘Sonnets,’ get the best book, Armitage Brown’s (? 6s., A. R. Smith); for the allegorical view of them, Mr. R. Simpson’s ‘Philosophy of Shakespeare’s Sonnets’ (3s. 6d., Trübner); for useful information and a mistaken theory, Mr. Gerald Massey’s book—the edition sold off at 5s. 6d. (Reeves and Turner).—Of course, subscribe a guinea a year to the New Shakspeare Society (Hon. Sec. A. G. Snelgrove, Esq., London Hospital, E.), read its Papers, and work its Texts, specially the parallel ones.

Get one or two likely friends to join you in your Shakspeare work, if you can, and fight out all your and their difficulties in common: worry every line; eschew the vice of wholesale emendation. Get up a party of ten or twelve men and four or six women to read the plays in succession at one another’s houses, or elsewhere, once a fortnight, and discuss each for half an hour after each reading. Do all you can to further the study of Shakspeare, chronologically and as a whole, throughout the nation.

systematic Hermeneutic [science of interpretation] of Shakspeare’s text.’ It is strongly against plausible emendations, and is well worth careful study.

¹ Prof. Dowden, who has been through all the German commentators, thinks Kreyssig’s *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare* (a big book), and *Shakespeare-Fragen* (a little book), the best popular introduction in German to Shakspeare.

Lastly, go to Stratford-upon-Avon, and see the town where Shakspeare was born, and bred, and died; the country over which he wandered and played when a boy, whose beauties and whose lore, as a man, he put into his plays. Go either in spring, in April, 'when the greatest poet was born in Nature's sweetest time,' and let Mr. Wise ('Shakespeare: his Birthplace and its Neighbourhood,' p. 44, 58, &c.) tell you how 'everything is full of beauty' that you'll see; or go in full summer, as I did one afternoon in July this year. See first the little low room where tradition says Shakspeare was born, though his father did not buy the house till eleven years after his birth;¹ look at the foundations of 'New Place,' walk on the site of Shakspeare's house, in the garden whose soil he must often have trod, thinking of his boyhood and hasty marriage, of London, with its trials and triumphs, and the wonders he had created for its delight; follow his body, past the school where he learnt, to its grave in the Avon-side church ringed with elms; see the worn slab that covers his bones, with wife's and daughter's beside; look up at the bust which figures the case of the brain and heart that have so enriched the world, which shows you more truly than anything else what Shakspeare was like in the flesh; try to see in those hazel eyes, those death-drawn lips,² those ruddy cheeks, the light, the merriment, the tenderness, the wisdom, and love that once were theirs; walk by the full and quiet Avon's side, where the swan sails gently, by which the cattle feed; ask yourself what word sums up your feelings on these scenes: and answer, with me, 'Peace'!

Next morning, walk up the Welcombe road, across the old common lands whose enclosing Shakspeare said 'he was not able to bear:' when up Rowley Bank, turn round; see the town nestle under its circling hills, shut in on the left by its green wall of trees. The corn is golden beside you. Meon Hill meets the sky in your front; its shoulder slants sharply to the spire of the church where Shakespeare's dust lies: away on the right is Broadway, lit with the sun; below it the ridge of

¹ He may have rented it before; but I expect that the former house, in Henley Street, in which John Shakspeare dwelt, would have a better claim to be 'the birth-place,' if it were now known.

² 'We may mention—on the authority of Mr. Butcher, the very courteous clerk of Stratford Church, who saw the examination made—that two years ago Mr. Story, the great American sculptor, when at Stratford, made a very careful examination of Shakspeare's bust from a raised scaffolding, and came to the conclusion that the face of the bust was modelled from a death-mask. The lower part of the face was very death-like; the upper lip was elongated and drawn up from the lower one by the shrinking of the nostrils, the first part of the face to 'go' after death; the eyebrows were neither of the same length nor on the same level; the depth from the eye to the ear was extraordinary; the cheeks were of different shapes, the left one being the more prominent at top. On the whole, Mr. Story felt certain of the bust being made from a death-mask.'—F. J. F., in *The Academy*, Aug. 22, 1874, p. 205, col. 3. *The Academy*, our 'leading literary paper,' should be read for Shakspeare news.

Roomer Hill, yellow for harvest on the right, passing leftwards into a dark belt of trees to the church, their hollows filled with blue haze. In this nest is Shakspeare's town. After gazing your fill on the fair scene before you, walk to the boat-place, paddle out for the best view of the elm-framed church, then by its river-bordered side to the stream below; get a beautiful view of the tower through a vista of trees beyond the low waterfall; then pass by cattle half-knee deep in the shallows, sluggishly whisking their tails, happily chewing the cud; go under Wire-Brake bank, whose trees droop down to the river, whose wood-pigeons greet you with coos; past many groups of grey willows, with showers of wild roses between; feathery reeds rise beside you, birds twitter about, the sky is blue overhead, your boat glides smoothly down stream: you feel the sweet content with which Shakspeare must have looked on the scene. Later, you wander to Shottery, to Ann Hathaway's cottage, where perchance in hot youth the poet made love. Then you ride through Charlecote's tall-elm'd park, and see the deer whose ancestors he may have stolen; on to Warwick, with its castle rising grandly from Avon bank; back to Stratford, with a glorious view from the hill, on your left in your homeward ride.¹ Evening comes: you stroll again by the riverside, through groups of townsfolk pleasant to see, in well-to-do Sunday dress. From Cross-o'-th'-Hill you look at the fine view of church and town, backt by the Welcombe Hills; through Wire Brake² and ripe corn, you walk to the bridge that brings you to the opposite level bank of the stream. Then you lie down, chatting of Shakspeare to your friend, while lovers in pairs pass lingering by, and the twilight comes. Then again you say that the peace of the place was fit for Shakspeare's end, and that the memory of its quiet beauty will never away from your mind.

Yes, Stratford will help you to understand Shakspeare.

These pages aim at giving, shortly, to beginners, such parts of the result of my last year's work at Shakspeare—in scanty leisure—as I wish some one had given me on my first start at him. Of their immaturity, beside the ripeness of Gervinus, and of their unworthiness to appear before his book, I am only too painfully conscious. But as I have gone among working-men and private friends, I have been asked to put some of these things in print; and for my haste in thus doing it I willingly risk the blame of those who know far more than I do, being

¹ If you can, get on to ruin'd Kenilworth, where Shakspeare may have seen Leicester's pageants before Elizabeth, in 1575 (see my edition of *Captain Cox*, Ballad Society), to use in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Heaven forbid that he should have turned the great mason Captain into Bottom!

The young Stratford folk call their Sunday-evening stroll through this wooded bank, 'Going to Chapel.' That their devotions interested the attendants, I can say.

assurd that what I have written will be of use to others who know somewhat less than myself. Work at Shakspeare, serious intelligent work, is what I want, from thousands of men and women who have hitherto neglected him. If they will give me that, they may abuse as they like, the mistakes they may find in these hints.

My thanks are due to my friends Professors Hertzberg, Wagner, Seeley, and Dowden, Mr. Spedding, Mr. Hales, Dr. Abbott, Mr. Halliwell, Dr. Ingleby, Mr. Aldis Wright, Mr. Wheatley, Mr. Malleson, &c. for their hints on this Introduction.

F. J. FURNIVALL.

3 ST. GEORGE'S SQUARE, N.W.

Sept. 16, 1874.

P.S.—Prof. Ingram, of Trin. Coll., Dublin, has just (Nov. 8) sent me his Paper on the weak- and light-endings in Shakspeare. The 16 *weak-endings* are ‘and, but (=L. *sed*, and=*except*), by, for, from, if¹, on, nor, or, than, that, to, with.’ The 54 *light-endings* are ‘am, are, art, be, been, but (=only), can, could, did², do², does², dost², ere, had², has², hast², have², he, how³, I, into, is, like, may, might, shall, shalt, she, should, since, so⁴, such⁴, they, thou, though, through, till, upon, was, we, were, what⁵, when⁵, where⁵, which, while, whilst, who⁵, whom⁵, why⁵, will, would, yet (=tamen), you.’ Here is an extract from his

¹ Except in the combination *as if*.

² Only when us’d as auxiliaries.

³ When not directly interrogative.

⁴ When followd immediately by *as*. *Such* also, when followd by a substantive with an indefinite article, as ‘Such a man.’

⁵ When not directly interrogative. Prof. Ingram’s Paper will appear in *The New Shakspeare Society’s Transactions*, Part 2. He says:—

‘The weak-endings do not come in by slow degrees, but the poet seems to have thrown himself at once into this new structure of verse; 28 examples occurring in *Antony and Cleopatra*, whilst there are not more than two in any earlier play. . .

‘As long as the light-endings remain very few, no conclusion with respect to the order of the plays can be based on them.

‘But the very marked increase of their number in *Macbeth*, showing a strong development of the same tendency which, further on, produced the large number of weak-endings, seems to show that it was the latest of the plays preceding the weak-ending period. . .

‘An examination of the weak-endings in *Henry VIII.* strikingly confirms the conclusions of Mr. Spedding respecting the two different systems of verse which co-exist in that play. In the Shaksperian portion, as marked off by him, there are 45 light-endings against 6 in Fletcher’s part, and 37 weak-endings against 1 in Fletcher’s part. And these weak-endings occur in every Shaksperian scene. The one weak-ending in Fletcher’s portion occurs in a scene (iv. 1) which has not been uniformly assigned to Fletcher, and which, it is curious to observe, of all the Shaksperian scenes in the play approaches, in the matter of the feminine ending, nearest to Fletcher. . . The date, also, which has been assigned by Mr. Spedding

table of these endings in the late plays, whose order alone they help to settle :—

	No. of light endings	No. of weak endings	No. of Verse lines in play	Percentage of light endings	Percentage of weak endings	Percentage of both together
Macbeth	21	2				
Timon	15	?	1112	1.35	?	?
Antony and Cleopatra . .	71	28	2803	2.53	1.00	3.53
Coriolanus	60	44	2563	2.34	1.71	4.05
Pericles (Shakspeare part)	20	10	719	2.78	1.39	4.17
Tempest	42	25	1460	2.88	1.71	4.59
Cymbeline	78	52	2692	2.90	1.93	4.83
Winter's Tale	57	45	1825	3.12	2.47	5.59
Two Noble Kinsmen (non-Fletcher part) . .	50	34	1378	3.63	2.47	6.10
Henry VIII. (Sh's. part)	45	37	1146	3.93	3.23	7.16

to Shakspeare's portion of *Henry VIII.* is confirmed by the Table, in opposition to the views of Elze and others. It appears to be without doubt his latest work; a conclusion which quite falls in with what is known from an external source as to the production in 1613 of a play which there is every reason to believe was the same.

With respect to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, the weak-ending test confirms what has been otherwise shown by Mr. Hickson and others, namely, that here again there are two different systems of verse. In Fletcher's part there are 3 light endings to 50 in the other portion, and 1 weak-ending to 34. The weak-endings are found in every non-Fletcherian scene but two. One is i. 4, in which there are, exclusive of a song, but six lines in all. The other is iii. 3, which, curiously enough, as Mr. Furnivall remarks, the stopt-line test would give to Fletcher. The scene is one about which, notwithstanding what has been said by Mr. Hickson, there is not much to mark the authorship.

The answer to the question—Who was the author of the non-Fletcherian portion of this play?—does not force itself on my mind with the same clear evidence as the conviction that the non-Shaksperian part of *Henry VIII.* is by Fletcher. The choice of the story, in which the passion is, after all, of an artificial kind, the toleration of the "trash" which abounds in the underplot, the faintness (as I must persist in calling it) of the characterization, and, in general, the absence, except in occasional flashes, of the splendid genius which shows itself all through the last period of Shakspeare, I have always found very perplexing. In reading the (so-called) Shaksperian part of the play, I do not often feel myself in contact with a mind of the first order. Still, it is certain that there is much in it that is like Shakspeare, and some things that are worthy of him at his best; that the manner, in general, is more that of Shakspeare than of any other contemporary dramatist; and that the system of verse is one which we do not find in any other, whilst it is, in all essentials, that of Shakspeare's last period. I cannot name any one else who could have written this portion of the play. The weak-ending affords a ready test of the correctness of Knight's notion that Chapman was the writer. I have examined the play of *Bussy d'Ambois*, and do not find in it a single instance of the weak-ending, and, turning rapidly over Chapman's whole works, I see no evidence that he was ever at all given to it. If Shakspeare be—as we seem forced to believe—the author of the part of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* now usually attributed to him, this will take its place in the series of his works between the *Winter's Tale* and *Henry VIII.*

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS:

A

CHAPTER OF STAGE HISTORY.

SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS:

A

CHAPTER OF STAGE HISTORY.

AN ESSAY ON THE SHAKESPERIAN DRAMA.

BY A. H. PAGET.

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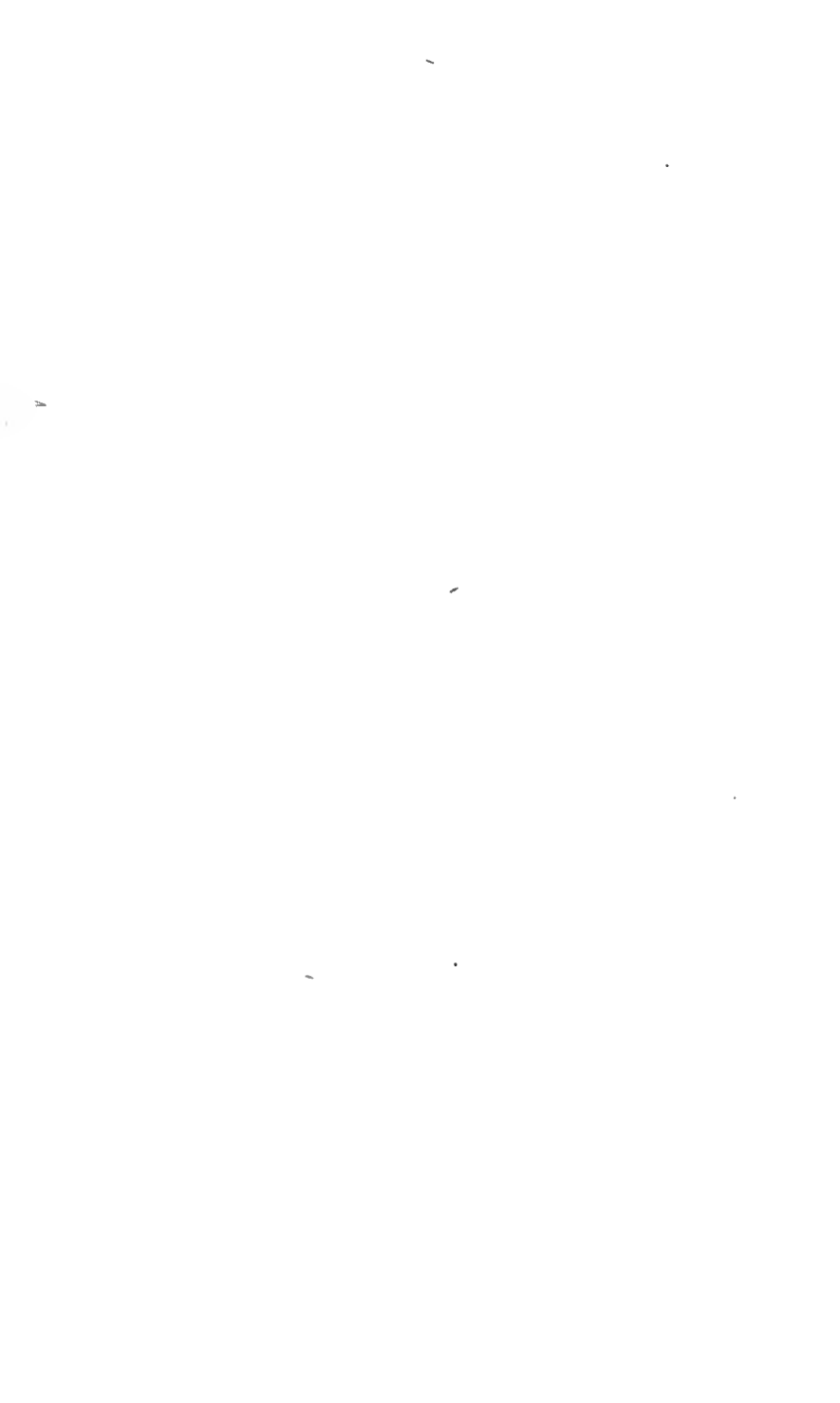
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PREFACE.

THE following pages were originally prepared as a paper to be read before the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, early in the present year; and, at the time of its delivery, I had no intention of their appearing in print. Since then, however, suggestions kindly made by Mr. J. O. Halliwell, Mr. C. Roach Smith, and other gentlemen qualified to advise, have led me to venture upon publication; and I now lay my essay, in a slightly enlarged form, before such of the general public as take interest in tracing the connection of Shakespeare's works with the English stage.

A. H. P.

April, 1875.



SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS :

A CHAPTER OF STAGE HISTORY.

THE title of this paper, I trust, fairly indicates the subject proposed. It does not treat of Shakespeare personally ; nor of his plays, described simply with reference to himself. There is no attempt to show how the plays became what they are ; I simply take them as they stand, and try to show what has been done with them since they came from the mind of the poet. I want to tell something of the conditions under which they have been presented during a long series of years ; for although Shakespeare is so much more to us than a mere writer of stage plays, I dare assert that now, as in his own day, the theatre is his proper and most natural home. He may be studied and dearly prized in all places ; but to know Shakespeare in his fulness, without the agency of the stage, is, to my mind, as impossible as to taste the magical charm of snowy peaks and glaciers only from poring over books of science at home.

Our concern, then, is less with the great Original than with those men through whom, for better or

worse, he has been made known; the dramatists who have handled his plays, and the actors who have been the living embodiments of his creations. It is a wide field of research, and a lecture can only point out a few of its features. The temptation to pile up great names, and say a little about everything, must be resisted. And, so, looking to the real drift of the matter, and trying to find for this paper the most exact description, I have ventured to call it 'A Chapter of Stage History.'

It would seem best to begin with an account of the Elizabethan theatres, in order to explain how Shakespeare's plays were first acted, and that we might call to mind under what outer conditions he wrote as he did. But this of itself is ample subject for a lecture, and, awaiting further instalments from Mr. Halliwell of his 'Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare,' the task would be somewhat hazardous. The company of players to which the poet belonged travelled about, performing in noblemen's mansions, inn-yards, and civic halls; in our own Townhall, Mr. Kelly has told us.* But they were chiefly engaged at two theatres in London, the Blackfriars, and a large circular or polygonal playhouse, the Globe, on the Bankside. The buildings were simple in form; in the larger theatres only the stage, the 'tiring rooms, and galleries were roofed over, the central space, or yard, being open to the sky. There must have been plenty of shouting and

* 'Notices illustrative of the Drama and other Amusements at Leicester,' by William Kelly.

bluster on the stage, and rough manners among the audience. There was no scenery; the walls were draped with tapestry or curtains, and other curtains placed between the front of the stage and the back, called traverses, increased or lessened the visible area, according as they were drawn together or thrown apart. There was then nothing of the stage illusion that forms so large a part of modern theatrical displays. The actors were left on a naked platform, to tell the poet's story by their own unaided efforts.

Now, we may well believe that there were real advantages in this simplicity and freedom from the restraints that the attempt to produce scenery would have imposed. There was then nothing to distract the mind: old tapestry and traverses suggest no comparison with the outer world of real life. *We* are not always so fortunate: for ill-painted landscapes and bad architecture do. And more than that; when he desired, Shakespeare drew in his own words the background of his plays. Had less been asked of the imagination of others, Shakespeare would have given fewer hints to guide their fancy, and much exquisite description of nature might never have been penned. In writing the *History of King Henry the Fifth*, he seems to have keenly felt this inability to do more than suggest, and he boldly challenges the good-will of his audience assembled at the Globe. Perhaps nowhere, in the whole range of the drama, could be found so powerful an appeal of the kind, as the noble speech at the

opening of this play. The poet calls upon his hearers to take their part in the illusion ; for without their lively sympathy he can do nothing for them.

“ O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention !
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene !
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
Assume the port of Mars ; and, at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire
Crouch for employment. But, pardon, gentles all,
The flat, unraisèd spirit that hath dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object : can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France ? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt ?
O, pardon ! since a crooked figure may
Attest, in little place, a million ;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose, within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous, narrow ocean parts asunder.
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts,
Into a thousand parts divide one man,
And make imaginary puissance.
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth :
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass ; for the which supply,
Admit me, Chorus to this history ;
Who, prologue-like, your humble patience pray,
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.”

On what, then, did Shakespeare rely, for the

working out of his conceptions? On good acting, and that only. The age that produced great dramatists produced great actors also; the two were cast in the same mould, and, in several cases, the same individual was at once actor and dramatist. The mighty lines of the poet called forth the actor's genius; and the poet himself, hearing his words sent back to him with the added force of impassioned utterance, wrote in confidence that his thoughts would be understood and realized. This held good with every portion of a play; for we read that leading actors did not then disdain to undertake small parts besides their chief character. And thus servants and messengers were presented by men of the highest stamp; a thing not often seen on the modern stage.

It is a common regret that it is so hard to judge of actors of a former age. We wish to know how actors whom we are used to see, would compare with the great men of past days. We can read descriptions of their playing, collect scraps of anecdote that prove their genius, study their portraits; but we come away, after all, very little satisfied, and with a mighty hunger for more exact information. The further back we go, the greater this uncertainty becomes: in the infancy of an art the standards of comparison are indefinite, and the data for exact analysis are wanting.

This applies in a high degree to our knowledge of the original acting of Shakespeare's plays. We have, indeed, the names of the chief performers of

the day ; but we cannot do with them, as we might with the painters of former times, set side by side works by Raphael and Rembrandt, or of Holbein and Gainsborough, and nicely weigh the manner of each master. We cannot thus set the art of Burbage by that of Betterton, nor feel on sure ground in balancing the merits of Garrick's tragedy and Kean's.

But there is no doubt whatever that the greatest actor of Shakespeare's day was Richard Burbage. He played Shylock, Richard III., Prince Henry, Romeo, Henry V., Brutus, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Macbeth, Pericles, and Coriolanus. Probably, in every case too, Burbage was the original performer of these parts ; and it is amazing to think of the good fortune of an actor to whom it fell, to be the creator on the stage of such a wondrous round of characters.

Burbage lived long before the days of professional critics ; and except from mention of his name in legal documents relating to various theatres, and from a few poems, we know but little about him. The list of his characters is taken from a manuscript epitaph in the British Museum, which, though not a brilliant poem, has a few expressions that convey real ideas.

“ Tyrant Macbeth, with unwasht, bloody hand,
We vainly now may *hope to understand.*”

Without Burbage, the written character would be an insoluble riddle.

“Thy stature small, but every thought and mood
Might throughly *from thy face* be understood;
And his whole action he could change with ease,
From ancient Lear to youthful Pericles.”

Truly Burbage had taught this man something worth knowing. Here is clear insight into the whole art of acting; a piece of sound dramatic criticism from one who had thought the matter out for himself, and had received his impressions direct. This was probably written soon after Burbage died, in 1619. Another poem, dated 1672, by Richard Flecknoe, tells that, he “ne’er went off the stage but with applause;” and, with a finer artistic discernment, that he was “beauty to the eye, and music to the ear.” But we must accept this eulogium with caution. Fifty years had passed since Burbage died, and the lines must have been the embodiment of tradition rather than, as in the last case, the outcome of the writer’s own vivid recollection.

Bishop Corbett in his “*Iter Boreale*,” written about 1620, gives trifling, but genuine, evidence of the place this actor filled in the popular mind. He tells that when an innkeeper at Bosworth was describing the fight there, he let slip the name of Burbage for that of King Richard.

“And when he should have said, King Richard died,
And called—a horse! a horse!—he, Burbage, cried.”

Touching and very brief is another well-known epitaph—exit Burbage.

But Comedy bears equal rank with Tragedy in

Shakespeare's plays. A race of professional jesters had long existed ; and at this time the stage took to itself these free wits, and their talents became public property, instead of, as till then, the sole possession of persons of rank. Tarleton died somewhat early in Shakespeare's career ; but his successor, William Kempe, was the favourite low comedian of his day. He was the original Dogberry, and probably played Launce, Launcelot Gobbo, the Gravedigger, Touchstone, and Justice Shallow. Shakespeare wrote his low-comedy parts more fully than had been usual before that time, and as he meant them to be played. He hated gag :—"Let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them."

One broad distinction divides this period from our own. There were then no women on the stage, and women's parts were filled by boys or young men. This usage, I fancy, has had its bearing upon the plays themselves. In the induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, a page is dressed to personate the wife of the supposed lord, and the whole thing seems perfectly natural. *Coriolanus* is said to have gained an oaken chaplet, when "he might act the woman in the scene ;" that is, "ere his youth attained a beard." The performer of *Rosalind*, in '*As you like it*,' after allowing that it is "not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue," goes on with the words, "*if I were a woman*." *Hamlet* thus greets one of the players who come to *Elsinore* : "What ! my young lady and mistress ! By'r lady,

your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring." Surely, this is not the language of the prince to a woman, but to a growing boy, whom he was used to see *as a woman*. Now, it would seem that Shakespeare turned this condition of his own times to a real, dramatic purpose. How many of his heroines put on man's attire! Imogen wanders in Wales as a boy; Julia follows her faithless swain, and becomes his page; Viola, in the guise of Cesario, attracts the love of the Countess Olivia; Rosalind carries on a mock courtship with her lover in the forest; Portia conducts a case before the Doge of Venice. Shakespeare knew that his boys were best *as boys*, and so let his fancy run in this channel. The old custom of actors of repute taking apprentices to study under them, provided boys for these parts. Nathaniel Field was one of the most famous of these "woman-actors;" he was a contemporary of Shakespeare's, and may have played some of his heroines. At a later date, Kynaston was noted in the same line: both were fine tragedians in after life.*

The history of any subject will naturally divide itself into sections, or groups of facts, according as

* In 1629 some French actresses appeared at several London theatres in succession, but met with small encouragement. We may hear more of women on the stage at an early date, but there is abundant evidence that the commonly accepted view as to their absence is, in the main, correct.

certain agencies come into play, are expended, and give place to new. The foregoing depicts one portion of our dramatic history, more clearly defined, indeed, than any later period. When the Civil Wars broke out the theatres were suppressed, and, with the restoration of Charles the Second, begins a fresh chapter of the history of the English stage.

The circumstances that produced the altered aspect of this second dramatic epoch, and gave its distinctive tone, were in part social, and in part purely literary. In the days of Elizabeth the nation was instinct with patriotism and love of liberty. Those were the days of high hopes and mighty aspirations. Upon the vigorous stock of mediævalism was engrafted the restless spirit of enterprise and inquiry; and the result to letters was a sudden meridian of poetry. But the day of romance was soon gone: the best intellect of the land had been absorbed in a fierce domestic struggle, and the issue of twenty years of strife was such as to bring feelings of doubt and shame to honest men of all parties. And thus the keen spirit of the last age had given place to a prosaic temperament, little apt to produce a noble race of poets.

While, in our country, literature had been brought almost to a stand by the Civil Wars, its development had been rapid in France. The French nature has more love for finish and exactness of form in writing than the English, and an eagerness for rules that shall fence off exuberant growth from the pale of perfect refinement and propriety. In

1636 was founded the French Academy, and in 1659, Corneille, having elaborated certain ideas, faintly suggested by Aristotle, and, to some extent, carried out in the practice of the Greek dramatists, published his famous essay on the Unities of the Drama; of time, namely, of place, and of action. Here, then, was established a new code of dramatic laws, and a memorable instance given of a man's ingenuity misapplied.

Charles, and the immediate friends, who afterwards formed his Court, and who set the fashion in literary taste, from their residence abroad, were acquainted with these new rules of writing; and French modes soon prevailed in this country.

The primary concern of the stage of any period is, of course, the plays written for it by its own authors; they deal most with the interests of the day, and reflect the passing tone of thought and feeling. We have hitherto seen Shakespeare as a contemporary writer, the master-mind of the existing school. But the few years of the suppression had snapped the thread of continuity, till then the sole tradition of the stage. A fresh era had been ushered in, and Shakespeare and his brother poets were now the men of a bygone age, who were set in competition with the new writers of the day.

But these elder poets still held their ground, and it is noteworthy that Beaumont and Fletcher's plays were more acted than Shakespeare's; and it seems to have been a debated point whether Shakespeare or Fletcher was the greater dramatist. Langbaine, in

his account of the English dramatic poets,* enumerates twenty-three plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, from a total of fifty-two, as having been acted since the re-opening of the theatres ; whereas only about fifteen of Shakespeare's are distinctly mentioned in a similar list. The four grandest tragedies—Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear, and Othello—were then, we learn, stock plays ; the classic pieces were Julius Cæsar, Antony and Cleopatra, Timon, Troilus and Cressida, and Coriolanus. From the English Histories were played Richard II., Henry IV., and Henry VIII., and among the more purely imaginative poems were Cymbeline and The Tempest. But the statement that these plays were acted is only partially true ; they were acted, but with a difference.

For we now enter upon a novel phase of our subject. According to the new French rules, the grand poetic freedom of Shakespeare, his power of moving about in time and space in defiance of the unities, was licentious irregularity. He was, indeed, a striking writer, but he lived in a barbarous age, and sadly wanted form. His plays, therefore, were taken in hand by men who corrected their faults, and improved them for those more critical and enlightened times. Incidents and characters were struck out,

* "An Account of the English Dramatick Poets. Or some Observations and Remarks on the Lives and Writings, of all those that have publish'd either Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals, Masques, Interludes, Farces, or Opera's in the English Tongue. By Gerard Langbaine. Oxford. Printed by L. L. for George West and Henry Clements. An. Dom. 1691." A scarce volume in the possession of the writer.

and new were inserted ; the language was reformed ; music and show were introduced ; and thus Shakespeare's plays, as presented on the boards, took the impress of the shallow and vicious tastes of that day.

For example, what was *called* The Tempest, or *The Enchanted Island*, was a piece arranged by Dryden and Davenant, with music by Henry Purcell. The Cymbeline was by Durfey, and was styled the *Injured Princess*, or *The Fatal Wager*, and, no doubt, the change was more than skin-deep. Richard II. was rechristened the *Sicilian Usurper*, and Coriolanus *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth*, both being the work of Nahum Tate, one of the compilers of the New Version of the Psalms. In King Lear, also, Tate adopted a singularly bold treatment of the text, introducing love-passages between Edgar and Cordelia, giving the old King victory over his foes, and a happy ending to the piece. Timon was an alteration by Shadwell, afterwards poet-laureate. Troilus and Cressida, or *Truth found out too late*, was again by Dryden, and he, too, turned Antony and Cleopatra into *All for Love*, or *The World well lost*. Sir William Davenant, laureate to Charles I. and Charles II., combined materials from Measure for Measure and Much Ado into his *Law against Lovers* : but Davenant's masterpiece was Macbeth.

If all these productions had been merely ephemeral little importance would attach to them, and they would hardly be mentioned here. But this is not the case. In some instances these and similar

adaptations held the stage for years and years, nay, still hold it ; and one of my chief objects is to show that what for generations was played and accepted as Shakespeare was not Shakespeare, but some dilution of him prepared within the last two centuries. Davenant's *Macbeth* is a case in point. This tragedy, as we see it performed, contains a great deal more than we can find in our books, and we wonder where the supernumerary witches come from, and what is the meaning of "Locke's celebrated music," paraded in the bills. We notice that whereas Shakespeare employs his witches most sparingly, just so far as needed to pitch the key of the drama, and no more, in the acted play the stage swarms with witches, and witches of another species from the three weird and ghastly beings for whom Shakespeare has imagined a new dialect and a new nature scarce half human. But the intellectual standpoint of Shakespeare was above Davenant and those for whom he catered. The Italian custom of blending music with action had been naturalized in France, and came over here with other French fashions. Accordingly he turned *Macbeth* into a sort of 'melodrama, with interpolated songs and choruses set by Matthew Locke. After seventy years, indeed, Davenant's version was laid aside ; but scarcely a manager has yet ventured to present *Macbeth* without these clumsy musical scenes, which cling like brambles to the skirts of the tragedy, delay its progress, and are utterly foreign to the true spirit of the poem.

Samuel Pepys, an inveterate play-goer, saw Mac-

beth more than once acted in this form, and no doubt his words express the general opinion of his day upon the merits of the piece. We must remember that Pepys was no critic, and never troubled himself as to whether dramas were original or adapted, and probably knew very little of Shakespeare from books.

He enters as follows in his *Diary* under the date of January 6th, 1666-7:—"To the Duke's house, and saw 'Macbeth,' which, though I saw it lately, yet appears a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertissement, though it be a deep tragedy; which is a strange perfection in a tragedy, it being most proper here, and suitable." In November of the same year he witnessed another of these adaptations. It was *The Tempest*, "an old play of Shakespeare's." He says it was "the most innocent play" that he ever saw, and describes a curious trick in the music for managing an echo. He considers that "the play has no great wit, but yet (is) good above ordinary plays."

Some of Pepys's theatrical notes are too amusing to be passed over, while considering the debased state of the Shakesperian drama in his day. On March 1st, 1662, he saw *Romeo and Juliet* "the first time it was ever acted, but it is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard." The next year he went to see *King Henry VIII.* at the Duke's theatre. He calls it "made up of patches, nothing but show." "The Merry Wives," he says, "did not please me at all in no part of it." The *Taming of the Shrew*, in spite of "some very good pieces in it," he considered

“but a mean play.” It is clear that Pepys did not much care for Shakespeare, at least as his dramas were then presented. For one play his contempt was without measure. He writes for September 29th, 1662, “To the King’s Theatre, where we saw ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.”

The number of theatres in London was far less at this time than formerly. It is not easy to give an exact list of the houses open at any one date, but there must have been a dozen or fifteen in existence in the reign of James I. A few are lost sight of before the suppression; and on the re-establishment of the stage two grand companies were licensed by the King, one styled His Majesty’s Servants, and the other taking their title from the Duke of York, afterwards James II. The King’s Servants were soon settled in Drury Lane under a patent granted to Thomas Killigrew. The Duke’s Company had several removals, sometimes acting in theatres in or about Lincoln’s Inn Fields, and sometimes in Dorset Gardens, below Fleet Street, and were under the direction of Sir William Davenant. The lists of standard plays to be acted by these two companies were fixed by the Court and their own alternate choice; the dramas of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson were divided between them, and neither was suffered to invade the repertory of the other. In 1684, owing to the decay of some of the elder actors, it was found mutually advantageous to unite the

companies, and for ten years the King's House was the one theatre open, with Betterton as the leading tragedian.

Among actors, Thomas Betterton is the central figure of this era, as Burbage was of the last. He began his career just before the Restoration, and continued on the stage till his death, in 1710. He was the greatest actor of the day in Shakespeare's tragedies, and we know him by the descriptions of Pepys, Steele, Aston, and best of all, as judged by a fellow player, Colley Cibber. Pepys enters the following in his Dairy for August 24, 1661 :

“To the Opera (that is, Davenant's Theatre,) and there saw ‘Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,’ done with scenes, very well, but, above all, Betterton did the Prince's part beyond imagination.” Seven years later, after seeing the same play, he writes that he was “mightily pleased with it, but, above all, with Betterton, the best part, I believe, that ever man acted.”

Steele saw him buried in Westminster Cloisters, and, with a full heart, writes of his excellencies, and tells in what high estimation a nation should hold such an artist.*

These are sincere and valuable testimonies to the greatness of Betterton : but Cibber's practical knowledge of the art of acting gives special value to his evidence.

“Betterton was an actor,” he writes, “as Shake-

* ‘Tatler,’ May 4th, 1710.

spear was an author, both without competitors ! formed for the mutual assistance and illustration of each other's genius ! ” * * *

“ Could how Betterton spoke be as easily known as what he spoke, then might you see the Muse of Shakespear in her triumph, with all her beauties in their best array, rising into real life, and charming her beholders. But, alas ! since all this is so far out of the reach of description, how shall I show you Betterton ? Should I therefore tell you that all the Othellos, Hamlets, Hotspurs, Mackbeths, and Brutus's whom you may have seen since his time, have fallen far short of him ; this still should give you no idea of his particular excellence. Let us see, then, what a particular comparison may do, whether that may yet draw him nearer to you.”

He then describes his Hamlet, in the first scene with the Ghost. He began, he says, “ with a pause of mute amazement ; then, rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself.” Betterton had a fine sense of individuality in the portrayal of character. The wild starts and flashing fire of Hotspur were distinct from the occasional irritation of Brutus. To the alternation of rage and tenderness in Othello he gave a force and beauty long remembered. His style seems to have combined the boundless freedom and variety of nature, with the highest dignity of an ideal school of acting ; the latter an element inherited by immediate followers, while the former essential was almost lost sight of,

until revived by Garrick. In person he had little natural grace : for his figure was thick-set and rather clumsy, nor had his voice much sweetness or beauty of tone. But, in spite of all defects, Betterton's aspect was majestic and venerable, and when he entered the scene the eyes of all were fixed upon him.

Of his sound understanding and correct ear, Cibber writes,—“I never heard a line from Betterton in tragedy, wherein my judgment, my ear, and my imagination were not fully satisfied.” He heard this great actor say “that he never thought any kind of (applause) equal to an attentive silence : that there were many ways of deceiving an audience into a loud one, but to keep them husht and quiet was an applause that only truth and merit could arrive at.” These words show the true artist : would that others had power to hold their hearers like Betterton, and wisdom to know where their strength should lie !

Colley Cibber, here mentioned as a critic, was an important man in his day ; he was actor, play-writer, manager, adapter of Shakespeare, and afterwards poet-laureate. Cibber's version of *Richard III.* is still the *Richard* of the stage ; and from the mere fact of its vitality, apart from its obvious merits, his play demands notice almost above any similar production. The purport of this adaptation is to concentrate attention on *Richard*, by still further blackening his portrait, and by withdrawing lateral interests : by striking off the wings of the story. Cibber produced a work excellently fitted for the stage,

but at the loss of much that is grand in the original. Cibber's is an effective, but a coarse, play.

As Shakespeare wrote it, this is one of a series of historical dramas : closely connected with it are the three plays bearing the name of King Henry VI., in the last of which the future King Richard bears an important part. Now, as these were not then acting plays, Cibber took from them some fine speeches, in which Richard's character is carefully drawn, and the scene in which he murders the King in the Tower. That is utilization of waste material, and pardonable where the principle of wide deviation from an acknowledged work of art is once allowed. So, also, the total omission of the Duke of Clarence, with his famous dream, is well judged. For stage effect his part is not only over-weighted, considering the small figure he makes in this portion of the story, but, by its elaboration, is actually detrimental to a more important scene in the drama.

But the inherent vulgarity of the play, as revised, is shown by an interpolated passage, in which Richard deliberately sets himself to kill his wife by neglect and cruelty. Equally commonplace and morbid is a scene in which we are brought to the very threshold of the chamber where the children are smothered, and there see Richard prowling about and moralizing on his wickedness. The language of the piece is a compound of Shakespeare and Cibber, curiously interlaced ; for, besides the omissions and interpolations, he habitually debases the poetry to his own standard of dulness. Impassioned ejaculations of

grief and horror seemed profane when the stage had become a mere amusement, and were set aside. The glorious blank verse of the Elizabethan writers was then out of date; its rhythm was not understood. The accented *ed*, for instance, in the verb and participle jarred on Cibber's sensitive ear, and he would always change a line to avoid it. Thus, when Norfolk gives the King the paper, found in his tent :—

“ Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold,
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold,”

Richard boldly declares it—

“ A thing devised by the enemy.”

That would not do for Cibber; he wrote—

“ A weak invention of the enemy.”

Again, recurring words in a line were inartistic. After that awful night on Bosworth Field, with the shades of his victims : (and here Cibber has been at the pains to re-write the vision, and has cut out the agony of remorse and the frenzied self-examination at its close :) when aroused to arms, Richard exclaims—

“ O Ratcliff ! I have dreamed a fearful dream.”

Cibber has it :—

“ O Catesby, I have had such horrid dreams.”

Notice, too, that the crack rants in the part of Richard are Cibber's own invention.

Such are—

“Off with his head! So much for Buckingham.”

A tremendous hit on the stage. So again—

“Richmond, I say, come forth and singly face me,
Richard is hoarse with daring thee to arms.”

And, lastly—

“Hence babbling dreams, you threaten here in vain;
Conscience, avaunt! Richard's himself again.”

Perhaps these time-honoured points tell as much in favour of Cibber's version as its general practicability.

Immediately after the Restoration, women began to appear on the English stage, and it is pleasant to remember that Mrs. Betterton was the best actress in Shakespeare's plays. We have Cibber's word for this, and Pepys also sounds her praise. Mrs. Betterton first appeared as “Ianthé,” in a play by Davenant, and Pepys habitually calls her by this name. One day he saw the Duchess of Malfi “well performed, but Betterton and Ianthe to admiration.” Another time it was the Bondman, and he writes, “Betterton and my poor Ianthe outdo all the world.”

After Betterton came Barton Booth, a man of the highest culture, and of the most imposing dignity and grace of manner; but who was apt to become dull, being without the highest inspiration of his master.

Booth is remembered as the Cato of Addison's tragedy, and his best Shakesperian part was Othello. His contemporary Wilks was a fine Shakesperian actor, and played Hamlet well. By nature he must have been a light comedian ; his was an easier, more natural style than Booth's ; but in tragedy at times he wanted repose and weight. Cibber, the partner of these two men in the management of Drury Lane, in spite of grave defects of voice and person, acted a few of Shakespere's tragic parts ; giving them, no doubt, strongly marked individuality, or, as we might say, playing them as "character" rather than as tragedy. He acted his own Richard, Iago, and also Cardinal Wolsey. This last is interesting. Till that time the leading part in Henry VIII. had been the King himself. In Shakespere's day the stage treatment of Henry was a delicate matter ; it would not do to assign this part to an inferior actor, and set the King at a disadvantage beside the Cardinal. Hence arose a tradition : Booth played King Henry, and thus it was that an actor who allowed himself to be scarcely fit for tragedy, ventured to enact a character out of which Kemble afterwards made a striking stage-figure, if not an accurately historical portrait.

It is here convenient to pass over a few years, and come at once to the time when Shakespeare's plays, after a dull epoch, again held the foremost place on the stage. In 1741, David Garrick, an unknown man, played Richard III. at an out-of-the-way theatre in London, and at once sprang into fame. In 1747

he became joint patentee of Drury Lane, and set about the renovation of the Shakesperian drama. Now begins, though in an uncertain, tentative fashion, the restoration of the genuine text of the plays. Garrick announced *Macbeth* to be performed "as written by Shakespeare." What could this mean ? The age was uncritical, and had long accepted a spurious Shakespeare in perfect good faith. The great actor, Quin, knew no more than the public. He was startled at the vigorous, uncouth words of the original, and asked Garrick where on earth he had got such strange language. Locke's music, I believe, he retained ; no doubt, it lightens the play, and helps to make it go. But Garrick relied on his acting ; he carefully taught Mrs. Pritchard, his best actress, and by them the parts of *Macbeth* and the Lady were created anew. Garrick got together a grand company of players, and trained them in the study of Shakespeare ; and during nearly thirty years of management he placed a considerable number of Shakespeare's plays upon his stage. But in speaking of Garrick as a reformer, and he was one in many ways, we must remember the general taste of his day. The bearing of modern poetical thought is towards ideality ; it strives to reach above and below the visible, and to deal with subtleties and the inner significance of things. But this depth and refinement of fancy lay beyond the concerns of the shrewd, bustling manager, eager to draw the town by an effective representation. Garrick cast aside base traditions, but he fashioned new.

That the plays should be acted literally "as written by Shakespeare" was then, as it now is, out of the question; but as one who took unwarrantable liberties with the plots, characters and language, Garrick, like Falstaff, might count himself "little better than one of the wicked." Probably every play he brought out was disfigured, more or less, by interpolations and injurious omissions. But his adaptation of Hamlet is a curiosity of bad taste, and he candidly confessed that his producing this play with alterations, was "the most impudent thing he ever did." In Hamlet the story advances steadily to a certain point; but, in the latter scenes, the action is slow. The King is so very delicate in suggesting that Laertes should assassinate his nephew; Hamlet has so much to explain to Horatio about what has happened since they parted, and Osric is so very profuse, that we are a long time in getting over the ground. And in the fifth act of a tragedy it is a bold thing to bring on fresh characters to make us laugh while waiting for the funeral of a gentle girl. Hamlet's death is not glorious, it is simply very sad; and the close of the play is singularly melancholy, and, in a way, untheatrical. To write a showy drama was the last thing in Shakespeare's mind; events fall out in Hamlet just as they might in real life. But a play that is without ostentatious poetic justice is apt to seem tame and unsatisfactory to minds trained to look for it at every turn. Garrick felt these difficulties with growing force; and at last he declared that he would not leave the stage till he had

“rescued this noble play from the rubbish of the fifth act.” Very near the end of his career, he prepared a stage version without the gravediggers ; he made the King, when attacked, defend himself manfully, and brought down the curtain with plenty of bustle and effect. This arrangement of the plot served the remainder of Garrick’s time ; but, soon after his death, was happily laid by and forgotten.

Many years before, Garrick had produced *Romeo and Juliet*, re-written by himself, and, sad to say, his version still holds the stage. It is the same story over again as Cibber’s *Richard*, and every old adaptation of Shakespeare ; all must be plain, and lie on the surface. The poem, as it stands, was complicated, he thought, wanting in clearness and point. What business had *Romeo* with a previous suit ? The answer is that in this lies half the meaning and beauty of the story. In *Romeo*, Shakespeare shows an unreal, sentimental affection shrivelled up to nothing before the fire of true love. But Garrick failed to see this ; at one stroke his early passion is swept away, and *Juliet*’s name is brought prematurely forward, to hold the place of that of the scornful *Rosaline*. Again, in the last act : how weak, he thought, for the lovers to die, and not exchange a word, when so much might be made of the scene ! And so, by a happy thought, he lets *Juliet* wake in her tomb, before the poison which *Romeo* has drunk has taken effect, and there was a fine situation ! He carries her in his arms down to the footlights, and the two talk pure Garrick verse,

till the potion does its work, and Romeo expires in torture before the eyes of Juliet. All this is excellent good sense, and has been much admired as a capital sermon preached by Shakespeare. But what has become of the poem? Whenever this play, still called Shakespeare's tragedy, is acted, we have before us, not the "pair of star-crossed lovers," the enthronement of ideal devotion and purity amid bitter surroundings, but a dismal warning against imprudent attachments and the follies of youth.

But we cannot understand what Garrick did for Shakespeare, unless we know what he was as an actor. When he appeared, Quin was the foremost man on the stage; he was a sterling comedian, but in his hands tragedy had moved far away from nature, and was little more than stiff, conventional declamation. We read of Quin's pomposity, his "sawing" and "grinding" delivery, his "pumping" and "paving" gestures. Tragedy was then spoken in a monotonous chanting tone, without pause or variety. Garrick was of a quick and fervid nature, and this made his acting what it was. He broke up the measured declamation by startling pauses and striking gestures; he was all spirit and life; his voice was animated, his figure graceful, and his brilliant eyes darted fire in all directions. Quin and his colleagues of the formal, solemn school felt their empire vanish like smoke before the daring innovator. "If this young fellow is right," he said, "then we have all been wrong." Pedants alleged that Garrick played in defiance of the rules of

grammar ; that he paused when he ought to go on, and went on when he ought to pause : that his acting was affectation—mere clap-trap. But the world knew better, and the public verdict followed the summing-up of the author of the *Rosciad* :

“ When in the features all the soul’s portray’d,
And passions, such as Garrick’s, are display’d,
To me they seem from quickest feelings caught ;
Each start is nature, and each pause is thought.”

Garrick’s most formidable rival was Barry, the finest stage lover of the day. He was tall, which Garrick was not, and had a voice of the utmost tenderness and beauty. One season the town was thrown into excitement by these two tragedians playing *Romeo* against each other ; and though superiority in specific scenes was claimed for each, we may well believe that Barry’s rare personal gifts gave him the advantage. But when, some years later, Garrick and Barry were acting *Lear* at the same time, the public voice was less divided. We may picture Garrick as the graceful, dashing hero of high comedy, and the clever actor of eccentric character ; but we can clearly see that beyond and above all this were heights of poetic inspiration, and the simple pathos of nature.

“ The town has found out different ways
To praise the different *Lears* ;
To Barry they give loud buzzas ;
To Garrick only tears.”

And again,

“ A king, nay, every inch a king,
Such as Barry doth appear;
But Garrick’s quite a different thing,
He’s every inch King Lear.”

Before leaving this part of the subject, it would be unfair to pass over the name of Charles Macklin. He is chiefly remembered now as the writer of *The Man of the World*; but, in his day, he did good Shakesperian work, and, in respect of two plays, the *Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth*, he deserves to rank high as a reformer. In their early days, Macklin and Garrick were close friends: they dearly loved their profession, and were bent on breaking down the false style of acting then in vogue. And in this, Macklin got the start. A few months before Garrick came to the front, he acted Shylock in a new fashion. At that time the received play was a modification of Shakespeare’s, by Lord Lansdowne, and the Jew was a ludicrous character played by low comedians. Macklin changed all that: he went to the true text, and gave to Shylock his proper dignity and passion and pathos. When quite an old man, Macklin made an equally startling innovation in playing *Macbeth* in kilt and tartan. Garrick never ventured on this; he feared the ridicule of the public; for they were used to see stage personages either dressed as ordinary ladies and gentlemen, or in wonderful garments, meant to be correct, but revealing a strong undercurrent of the attire of that day. No doubt, Macklin’s *Macbeth* was a very incomplete portrait, and would seem now, as, for

reasons directly opposite, it seemed a century ago, little better than a snuff-shop Scotchman. But as a bold onward step towards the reproduction of historical costume for stage purposes, Macklin's experiment should be gratefully recorded.

I have dealt rather largely, and severely too, with the debased stage versions of Shakespeare's plays; and it might naturally be supposed that I would have the plays acted precisely after the stage directions given in the ordinary text. But it is time to take up the other side, and show this to be an impossibility. There are such things in dramatic workmanship as neatness of construction and skill in developing a plot. It is easier to put down several short scenes, as many as may be wanted, each dealing with a single group of characters, than so to marshal events that a few comprehensive scenes shall advance the story in various departments with smoothness and regard to probability. But how different the pleasure of an audience in the two cases! Consider the fulness and harmony and *sense of delusion* in such a scene as the fourth of the second act of King Henry IV., Part I. In a single picture we have Prince Henry's jest with Francis, Falstaff's account of the adventure on Gadshill, which is truly marvellous every way; and after all that is done, we get the acted interview between the king and his son, and wind up with the visitation of the sheriff, and the searching of Falstaff's pockets as he lies asleep behind the arras. A grander comic scene was never imagined; and our being enabled to see so much of

the characters at one view gives an air of reality to the whole that cannot be overrated.

As a contrast to this, compare the last act of *Macbeth*. How broken up and fidgetty it is! What harassing recollections we have of pieces of painted woods and fortifications clapping together and sliding apart; of little stage armies marching across, with drums and trumpets sounding from behind; of a few words being spoken, and then—a fresh scene! A room in the castle at Dunsinane, the country near Dunsinane, another room in the castle, the open country again, a place within the castle, a plain before it, and another part of the same plain, pass before the eye during this one act. Now, I am not a stage-manager, and do not propose how this is to be remedied; but I do say that no one would dare to write in this fashion now. The writer would so arrange his materials as to carry on the story without these rapid and wearisome changes of scene, which require a constant agility of mind to follow their movements, and never let us forget that we are in a theatre.

Of course we must take into account the altered condition of the stage in a period of three centuries. In Shakespeare's day, as before stated, the appointments of the London playhouses were very simple. In *King Henry VIII.* some unusual pageantry is indicated by the stage directions. The Queen's trial at Blackfriars, the coronation procession of Anne Boleyn, the vision of the spirits and the christening of the Princess Elizabeth, were clearly meant as

gorgeous spectacles. The stage must have been crowded with splendid figures, attired and arranged with the greatest care ; but there is no corresponding description of scenery ; and the records of that time show that only the rudest attempts were made to realize the localities of the various parts of the plays.

In this, at all events, we have improved since the sixteenth century ; and it stands to reason that the noblest works should be presented with all possible aids to comprehension and enjoyment, that they may not be at a disadvantage compared with pieces written for the stage as it now is. In producing Shakespeare's plays, therefore, regard must be had to the effective management of the scenery. It is always an evil to shift the scenes before the eyes of the spectators, that is, during the progress of an act ; consequently, other things being equal, the fewer the (dramatic) scenes are in number in excess of the number of acts, the smoother and more delightful will be the performance. And more than that ; the fewer (painted) scenes there are to provide, the more care and expense can be bestowed on each. And thus we have ample motives for striking out superfluous matter, for occasionally altering the sequence of incidents *as told*, and even for joining together different passages in the same play, where the fusion tends to true dramatic effect. Of course, manipulation of this sort may be done well or ill : to do it well requires both tact and poetic feeling, as well as strict reverence for the meaning of the

writer. But treatment such as this is very different from the method of the old adapters; they retained just so much of the original as suited their purpose, and then seasoned what was left, according to taste, with whatever they chose to consider wanting to make their dish complete.

Again, the change in social manners since the days of Elizabeth and James the First furnishes another reason for departing from literal exactness. We do not now, either in real life or in our literature, tolerate the grossness of ideas and language that is so common with the old dramatists. This freedom of speech is matter of historic interest to avowed students; but the mass of those who go to see plays are neither students nor philosophers, but simply an abstract of the world at large. A heavy responsibility rests with those who, except for grave and unanswerable reasons, suggest base thoughts to audiences composed of men and women of all ages, ranks and degrees of culture, or accustom them to associate debasing sights and coarse words with the pleasures of the theatre. I am aware that this trenches upon the whole question of the action of the stage upon public morals,—a topic I have no wish to handle. But, writing as a regular play-goer, one who has faith in the stage, and would willingly do it a service, I fairly say that I sometimes wonder at what seems to me a professional blindness to impropriety. It is, no doubt, the result of tradition, and a survival of former times. But we must look to it; for this is the bar

that shuts out from our theatres many who should be there to lend their influence in raising an institution that has in it the elements of the highest good, and that no amount of censure can ever destroy ; but which must be a blessing, or a public curse, in proportion as it finds its chief support among persons of character or the dregs of society.

But, to return to purely artistic questions. Many of the plays are too long to be acted as they stand, if judged by our modern ways of life ; and it is easy to find passages, just a few lines here and there, or even whole scenes, that may well be excused upon the stage. Till lately, audiences in London lived within a comparatively short distance of the theatres. Now it is far otherwise. Many persons travel a long way to reach their homes ; some must catch the last omnibuses or local trains, or the night trains into the country. This makes them impatient of anything like prosiness, for they are afraid of not getting away in time. It is sad to see half the spectators rising to their feet and moving off, while the players are still speaking on the stage ; but managers learn to accept this discourtesy, and cut short the endings of plays as far as can be done. And, after all, taste in certain matters will differ from one age to another. We fancy we have a nicer sense of the value of time than our fathers, and in everything study condensation and brevity. In imaginative writing a line of thought may be worked out or simply be indicated. Much modern poetry aims at suggestion rather than elaboration ;

many things are left to inference, which we must trace for ourselves. Judged from our present standpoint, Shakespeare is apt to be wordy in closing his tragedies. Take *Romeo and Juliet*: the lovers are dead; the tale is told, and we know what we ought to think about it. How wearisome would all that follows be, if played to the end! The watch enter the churchyard, and are active in the discharge of their duties; the prince and the heads of the rival houses are summoned, and grieve for what has happened; and Friar Laurence, while disclaiming all desire to be tedious, recapitulates most of the action of the story. We should not be interested to see Montague and Capulet shake hands, nor care much for the quaint tag set down for the prince.

“ For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.”

There is undoubted pleasure in feeling that something is withheld from our eyes and ears, which the poet entrusts to our inner sense; and I more than half believe that this formal closing of an account is best omitted. The effect of the last scene in *Hamlet* would be less striking were the curtain not lowered as the prince dies in the arms of Horatio. Or in *Othello*, if anything were said after the Moor, first throwing off their guard, with the cunning of a suicide, those standing by, has stabbed himself and fallen dead. So, too, in *Macbeth*, if instead of the death of the tyrant upon the stage, and the final rush

and cheer of the soldiers ; his head were brought in stuck on a pole, and the play ended with a speech from the new King, in which he promises promotion to all his friends, and invites them to see him crowned at Scone. It is, I believe, most impressive and dramatic to bring down the curtain close upon the catastrophe, and, at all risk, to avoid an anti-climax. Nothing tends to destroy effect like hanging fire at the last. Modern writers know this well, and, in the words of Benvolio,

“ The date is out of such prolixity.”

It is not my plan to give more than a brief outline of the course of the Shakesperian drama onwards to our own day. Much has been written upon the great players since Garrick ; and what they did may easily be learned from books. When Garrick died, Henderson was the first Shakesperian actor ; he was short-lived, but in spite of great personal disadvantages, made his mark both in tragedy and comedy. Then came Mrs. Siddons, whose celebrity has almost blinded us to the fame of Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and the tragedy-queens of the last century. With the Kembles, with John Philip Kemble especially, a more studied elocution came into vogue ; perhaps in the grandeur of his person and the dignity of his style, this actor more resembled Barton Booth than any one else before or since his time. Then, once more, came the reaction. Cooke appeared, who was the Shylock, Iago, and Richard of his day. It has been said that he represented

“the slang and bravura of tragedy,” and he declared that he would “make Black Jack (*i. e.* Kemble) tremble in his shoes.” The daring nature of Cooke’s acting reached a still higher development in the hands of the elder Kean, who professed a great admiration for Cooke. Kean had many points of resemblance to Garrick. Both were small and elastic in figure, were rapid and graceful in motion, had marvellously piercing eyes, and took their time with the words of a part in defiance of established rules. They were both men of quick and nervous temperament, and both destroyed and created schools of acting. Kean had not great versatility ; he did little in comedy, was not a writer, nor even a manager, and never influenced public opinion except through one channel. But as a tragedian we are tempted to believe that he surpassed Garrick ; that is, where bursts of overwhelming fury and deadly hate could avail. His Macbeth and Hamlet and Romeo were good only in parts ; his Richard III. must have equalled Garrick’s, and his Othello was grander beyond all comparison, for Garrick could make nothing of the character. Edmund Kean’s is not a happy name in dramatic records ; the story of his life is very melancholy. But, viewing him simply as a tragic artist, we can only wonder at his mighty genius.

Kemble’s management was marked by the increased attention given to the Roman plays. Such characters as Brutus and Coriolanus specially suited his distinguished appearance and manner ; and as

the plays were then getting to be acted with rather more correctness of costume and scenery than before, these pictures of classical life became very popular. Kean seems to have troubled himself little about the text of the plays, and generally acted them as they came to hand. An adaptation of *Richard II.*, after the old fashion, was written for him, but it soon fell into disuse. One reform we do owe to Kean : he restored the proper ending to *King Lear*. Macready was a wise and energetic manager, as well as a powerful actor, and worked hard and successfully to make the public appreciate Shakespeare. Under him the plays were produced in greater purity of form, and with a higher degree of artistic completeness, than ever before. We may expect to learn much of interest from the '*Reminiscences of Macready*,' as edited by Sir Frederick Pollock.

Since Macready's time there have been two notable managements in London in which Shakespeare's plays have been the chief feature ;—that of Charles Kean at the Princess's Theatre, and that of Mr. Phelps, at Sadler's Wells. At the Princess's a long series of plays were ably presented, all put on with the strictest regard to correctness of scenery, costumes, and accessories. Mr. Kean was an excellent antiquary, and spared no pains nor expense to make these "revivals" perfect lessons in archæology. He assumed the position of a public teacher more than any other manager.

Mr. Phelps's course was singularly honourable.

He took a small outlying theatre, then at the very lowest ebb of disrepute. He first set himself to establish decorum in his house, and then, gradually gaining power over the humble audiences of Clerkenwell and Islington, he trained a public to enjoy and understand the poetical drama when truthfully and intelligently set before them. Mr. Phelps enlarged the Shakesperian repertory to an extent altogether beyond precedent; and has himself, probably, played more of Shakespeare's characters, and succeeded in parts of more widely different types, than any actor on record. One example of his tact must suffice. No drama has been more tampered with and distorted in various attempts to fit it for the stage than 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' What Pepys thought of it when acted has been already shown, and, till lately, no one imagined that it could be performed as written. In dealing with this play, Mr. Phelps, as usual with him, stuck to the original text, and made of it a delightful entertainment, while maintaining throughout the spirit of the poem. And more than that: it has been left to Mr. Phelps to show that the character of Bottom the Weaver is a really fine part for an actor.

A few years ago, Mr. Fechter, then lessee of the Lyceum Theatre, drew considerable attention to the tragedies of Hamlet and Othello, from some novelities in the mode of presentation. His position as a London manager puts him on a different footing from that of several eminent foreign players, who have, from time to time, acted Shakespeare in this

country, and whose names are omitted from this sketch. Since then, Mr. Calvert has conducted a series of Shakesperian performances at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester. His method most nearly resembles that of Charles Kean ; and, like him, Mr. Calvert sometimes interpolates scenes, purely for the sake of scenic effect. In this particular, I think the judgment of both has been at fault ; but difference of opinion as to matters of detail must not blind us to the good work done.

Lastly, we must look forwards, as well as back on the past. During several years an actor has been preparing himself for the highest walks of his profession ; and training us, at the same time, to follow an artist who can display for us the depths of a man's heart. History repeats itself : the interest excited by Mr. Irving is such as that awakened when Garrick, and afterwards Kean, brought new life and fresh individualities to bear on an old theme. After a single attempt in the drama of Shakespeare, we cannot pretend to tell what career may lie before Mr. Irving, nor say to what renown he may attain. But if any should desire to settle his place now in the roll of players, I would turn to the old regret that it is so hard to compare actors of past and present times. How can we set in the same scale the evidence of our own senses and those of other people ? To persons who are simply aghast at Mr. Irving's yells and the glare of his eye, I would say that they little know this artist. Let them watch him from his first entry upon the scene till his

departure, and note the grace, the subtlety, the breadth and the repose; the shifting lines of thought mirrored in that wondrous face; the wealth of attitude and gesture, that form an endless series of pictures and suggestions of infinite delight; and their powers of appreciation and sympathy for art will grow by what they feed on. If to rush along on the whirlwind of passion, like Kean, to fascinate by marvellous strokes of nature, like Garrick, to appal by the horrors of a stricken conscience, like no one but himself, and to be, like Burbage, "beauty to the eye, and music to the ear;"—if to succeed in all this is to be a great actor, then, most assuredly, such an one is Irving.

But it will be said that I am romancing, and deluding myself with words. I trust not; but my field of vision is limited, and what we see and hear for ourselves goes for more than description at second-hand. I write only as I feel; that Mr. Irving is one who may show us the glories of the Shakesperian drama, so dear to our forefathers, even in a degraded state. And I further believe that, through men such as he, and by the faithful setting forth of Shakespeare's designs, adorned by every worthy means at our command, we may gradually attain to a fuller knowledge and a deeper understanding of the soul of poetry.

